







# MODERN CHINESE CIVILIZATION





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## PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

I HAVE been asked to write a new preface for the English translation of my book on Modern Chinese Civilization, and I comply with pleasure, though I can see nothing in recent events which lead me to modify my reading of the situation two years ago. Certain personages have disappeared from the political scene, Sun Yat Sen for example, but the principal war lords remain in the forefront, and the conceptions of their little clans have in no way changed, nor, considering their psychic or social age, can any change be expected from them — that is to say, their sole care is to assure to themselves the material benefits of power. General interests, the public good, are completely ignored in the present evolutionary stage of the Chinese, even of those educated abroad. These last have committed the serious mistake of thinking that *adopting* a political or social idea is the same thing as *adapting* themselves to it. But the adoption of such ideas by an old and backward people naturally does not create any new fitness on their part, and certainly does not imply 'adaptation.' On the contrary, adaptation may be a lengthy process, since it comes into collision with the whole past, an earlier life counted in hundreds, or even thousands, of years. The brain, real ruler of our destiny, cannot be transformed at a word of command; it develops only slowly: this is a biological law; nothing can prevail against it. This is the reason why the establishment of the Republic in China was an *anachronism*, the work of giddy heads, both foreign and Chinese. No other result was to be

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expected than a retrogression, a return to feudalism, to the rule of war lords and little political gangs. It is impossible for *democratic rule* to follow abruptly on the *patriarchal age*. And the present social situation (which belongs rather to the year 1000 than to the twentieth century) cannot be changed through the instrumentality of political puppets who have no programme, or, if by the aid of foreigners they have succeeded in formulating one, are incapable of carrying it out. Though Young China has barely emerged from infancy, its emancipators, Europeans, and especially Americans, have insisted that it should grow and mature immediately, and, moreover, free itself from all ancestral discipline. The result is plain: the Young Chinaman has up to now been nothing but a promoter of disorder and anarchy, with all the ruin resulting from them. Poverty is so great and so widespread throughout China that the mass of the people, 99½ per cent. of this mass, see in the intervention of foreign Powers their only salvation.

The Great Powers shrink from intervention; but they make a fatal mistake, for there is no other solution of the Chinese problem. Moreover, from time immemorial, China has never been extricated from a crisis except by the instrumentality of the foreigner. The Chinaman has never succeeded in governing himself. His last master was the Manchu; in old days he was dominated by the Turco-Iranian, both before and after the Christian era. China is nothing but a conglomeration of human groups, differing widely from each other, and naturally repelled by an instinctive antipathy, who

have always fought one another. There has never been real unity in China, either racial or political.

The Young Chinese who talk of uniting their country prove that they are ignorant of its people and its history. They have become foreigners in the eyes of the real Chinese of all classes, who nevertheless dare not resist. Thus anarchy continues. As for Chinese nationalism, so much vaunted by certain propagandists, it is only an illusion; it exists only in the minds of the European and the American. This nationalism is nothing but an eruption of greed, a shameless exploitation of the propertied classes.

The entrance into Peking of Chiang-Kai-Shek and Feng-Ya-Hsiang, the very Christian general, subsidized by Moscow, will alter nothing, any more than the bustle and stir of the phantom Government of Nanking, which in no way represents China, and has behind it no settled party with a real programme and real power, such as we have at home. Moreover, there are I know not how many governments: that of Canton, that of Hankow, of Szechwan, of Yunnan, of Mukden, etc. In short, nothing has changed since the death of Sun Yat Sen and the arrival of the Southerners in Peking, except the attitude of the Powers, of America in particular, which has committed the imprudence of recognizing as solid a Government without mandate and without authority, attacked already by the other clans, who will shortly overthrow it, to be themselves overthrown in their turn, in rapid succession. Thus the present tragi-comedy will go on, from which the whole Chinese people is suffering.



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There has been a complete misapprehension in Europe as to the significance of the victory ascribed to the Southerners with Chiang-Kai-Shek at their head. In reality it was two Northern generals, Yen Han Shen and Feng-Tu-Hsiang, who drove back Chang-Tso-Lin and conquered Peking. The real victor is no other than Feng, satellite of the Bolsheviks, who have supplied him with staff officers, money and munitions, while they direct his political manoeuvres. In short, it is Moscow which has organized the whole business and brought it to a successful issue. There have been no battles, no real military action; propaganda and the Chinese dollar have done it all.

And if we get below the surface, we quickly recognize that the contests between the war lords are nothing but pretence: the real struggle, as heretofore, is between Russians and Japanese for the domination of Manchuria and Northern China. The war lord of the north or the south is nothing but a puppet, and the strings are being pulled by some great Power or other for its own ends. And on this rivalry, this latent strife between the great nations, Young China batters; it exploits to the full the jealousy between the Powers, wresting from us concessions which will be disastrous to us and to China in a future which is only too near.

If civil war and anarchy persist, it is because of the mutual jealousies of the Powers. Nothing has been more fatal to the cause of order and humanity than the policy of the last three years, which has consisted in taking up an attitude of detachment with regard to the attacks of the Chinese on England, for instance, for-

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getting that mutual agreement in the present and in the future can alone safeguard the interests of England and America.

Therefore let us unite! Let us not wait until the mischief is irreparable. By our union we shall save China from herself, and consolidate this great world market. Has not industrial Europe suffered enough from the Russian crisis? Let, then, the Powers unite for one of the greatest efforts towards salvation and peace which Humanity has ever undertaken.

Read again, moreover, the history of China; this great country has never been extricated from its difficulties without the intervention of the Foreigner.

The truth is that if China is left to herself, there are hundreds of millions of helpless human beings who are doomed to struggle for half a century, as many a time in the past, amid all the anguish of insecurity and ever-increasing ruin.

The peace of the world and the future of civilization are at stake.

TOKYO, JAPAN,

*August 28, 1928.*



## INTRODUCTION

**I**N this volume I propose to give a general view of Chinese civilization as observed by me during the many years which I have passed in the country, when I was in daily contact with all classes of the population, from the mandarin to the humble coolie, with the artisan, the peasant, and the shopkeeper.

I have traversed the great roads of the plains, climbed the mountain paths, and lived in great cities. And to guard myself against the hasty and therefore mistaken generalizations of so many travellers, I have made a study of anthropology and sociology, as well as of the natural sciences, thus enabling myself to understand the possibilities of economic development.

I am thus in a position to describe Chinese civilization as it was in the past, and as it remains to this day, in spite of differences more apparent than real. For anyone who knows the Chinese character to its depths, and Chinese sociology with its secular characteristics, must acknowledge that since the revolution of 1911 there has not been a trace of real progress, either in the social or the political order. Rather the contrary! The facts will make this clear.

From the political standpoint, the unity effected in the sixteenth century by the Manchu conquerors is to-day destroyed. To-day is the reign of military dictators, real feudal barons, who, with their armies of mercenaries, array the provinces one against another, and lay hold of all the powers and resources of the country – so thoroughly that the new regime called ‘republican’ has

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been converted into a veritable anarchy under the hardest of despotisms.

As for the central government, it is but a shadow, recognized only by the great foreign Powers, who know not to which puppet to address themselves.

Young China, together with certain politicians of Europe and America, seduced by social chimeras, and imagining in their ignorance that all races are alike, — Young China placed all its hopes on Sun Yat Sen, the Asiatic Washington, as Americans were pleased to call him. To-day everyone knows the lamentable failure of a man who, as Yuan Che Kai said, wanted to 'chip the feet of his people in order to fit them into democratic shoes.'

What a costly failure for the Chinese people, what a source of misery and ruin, even without counting the immense loss of human life!

It is not progress when there is disorder everywhere — except in a few provinces, such as Shansi — when the mercenaries of the 'Tu Chuns,' brigands whose number has become legion, treat vast regions as conquered territory, pillaging and even massacring the unhappy peasants who resist them.

It is not progress when the institution of the family is violently assailed, — the family, that solid unit whose tenacious organization has constituted the strength of China, and has enabled her to endure throughout the ages, in spite of many political and social upheavals. No doubt the Chinese family system is excessively archaic, in ways which I shall explain; the authority of the father is too absolute. But it must not be forgotten

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that to the Chinaman, in whom the religious sentiment is very slightly developed, the cult of the family constitutes the great and indeed the only moral discipline. If then this ancient organization is to be brutally handled, if it is to be transformed in a day, the unknown has to be faced, and the whole social edifice has to be reconstructed. And on what foundations?

It is not progress when Young China is in a ferment, perorating unweariedly, taking up an insulting attitude towards the European, — the European who has given to China quick and easy means of communication, and who has created the present economic awakening. These young people are renouncing all discipline, family, social or legal. They are aspiring to instruct their parents, masters and governors. They are making a clean slate of the past, even of Confucius and his precepts. They are showing an eagerness for destruction which in no way astonishes those Europeans who know the Asiatic mind, — a mind whose equilibrium is invariably upset when brought in contact with our social ideas, so alien to their own; an inevitable sequel which professional emancipators, even the best intentioned, such as the adherents of the Y.M.C.A., always refuse to recognize.

Is it a sign of progress that the young Chinaman is speaking to-day the language of Soviet Russia in its most correct brutality? Their nihilism, their negation of all family or social duty not included in the Bolshevik catechism, their contempt of the best ancestral tradition, or again their quite recent affectation of an extreme materialism, show plainly the imprint of Moscow.

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Doubtless there is a certain amount of pose in this new attitude taken up by the young Chinese, — so credulous, so imitative. Whether that be so or not, one cannot fail to recognize this undeniable fact that the definitely anarchic tendencies of these young people would not have sprung so quickly from the propaganda of Moscow, if an education, ill-adapted to the biological age of the Chinaman, and labelled 'democratic,' had not already invaded the old family structure, and, in consequence, the social structure of the country. How many worthy people of Europe and America, with a mania for doing good, but ignorant of the Asiatic world, have produced nothing but evil! But why have they refused to give any heed to the deep racial differences and social differences, long insoluble? Why always be guided by the principles of equality and uniformity, where biological laws prescribe diversity?

The consequence is that Young China no longer thinks or acts except to carry out, if not all the dogmas of Moscow, at any rate all its political and social precepts. Bolshevist domination is real, and will become intensified in the next few years if America and some of the European powers do not arrive at a better understanding of their interest, if not their duty, and do not realize before it is too late towards what complications and political dangers they are being swept. There is endless talk of world-peace, but to how small an extent have we taken the path towards its realization!

For instance, people refuse to see in the present bolshevizing agitation of the Chinese student anything but a manifestation of new-born patriotism. Nevertheless,

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if we go back to the history of China and of her relations with Europe, we shall see that the present movement is only a repetition of the old outbreaks of hatred of the foreigner in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Apparently it is useless to recall how the European was treated, how he was penned up at Canton and elsewhere, and what contempt was implied in the current appellation, '*yang kou*' (foreign devil), showered upon him. And to-day as at the more recent date of 1900, hatred of the foreigner still remains the peculiar expression of Chinese nationality and of that racial pride which has never ceased to consider foreigners as '*Man Tze*' (Barbarians), to be thrust out by every possible means.

Under these conditions, can the new title 'Republic' alter the mental attitude which has endured for so many centuries? You cannot change your nature with your shirt. And wearing a bowler and a European suit cannot produce an organic change in a yellow or black man. Evolution, especially in ancient peoples, operates very slowly, very gradually. Common sense tells us that.

Some people will tell you, 'Look how China is transformed; she has given herself a Parliament.' Doubtless she has; but this strange assembly, unlike any other, and the laughing-stock of foreigners and Chinese alike, never represented anything but the ambitions and interests of the military dictators, who themselves chose the deputies and rewarded them with their daily supply of rice, and the small luxuries of which the Chinaman is so greedy.



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These, then, are the facts.

The new judicial code is nothing but a gesture to impress the European jurist. Chinese justice remains particularly summary and cruel.

The Bolshevist hold in China has been denied. But nothing is more true, nothing struck me so forcibly during my journeys into the interior during these late years. I had been under the impression that the Moscovite propaganda was localized in the great towns of the coast. I was forced to realize my mistake.

On the other hand, at the time of the strikes at Shanghai, Tientsin and Canton, onlookers were soon convinced that the real organizers and leaders were not students but quite certainly Bolshevists under the direction of Karakhan, Soviet Minister at Peking. The students were only the instruments, the puppets, as old English residents at Shanghai soon discovered, — marionettes, whose strings were pulled by Moscow.

Moreover, these strikes would never have extended so far, nor would they have assumed such a serious character, if there had not been the technical skill and the driving force of a European organizer at their back. Purely Chinese movements are only fires of straw, quickly extinguished. But the Bolshevist has not only fomented these strikes against 'imperialist' Europeans, with the Chinese student as tool, he has succeeded in stretching his grasp so far as to dominate the southern provinces.

At the present time, a certain Borodino is the real dictator at Canton, since the death of Sun Yat Sen. Were it not for his omnipotence, the English of Hong-

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Kong, whose commerce has been so deeply affected, would long ago have brought the Chinese authorities to reason, instigated also by Chinese merchants, themselves still harder hit than the English.

This is not all ; in the north, the famous Christian general, Feng-Tu-Hsiang, the notorious quick-change artist, is Moscow's man. At this moment he is fighting with the money and the arms of the Soviet to make Russia, not himself, master. For his short-sighted trickery will have for him no other result than to make him a mere stalking-horse, a puppet in the claws of the Soviet bear.

It is, moreover, not the first time that China has tried this game with Europeans, attempting to pit one nation against another; it is the perennial policy of all feeble peoples, and requires no expenditure of imagination. The Chinaman is not clever at it. He has always lost in this game of dupes, and to-day more than ever he is the goose of the fable. The chief losers in the present economic fight against the Powers called 'Imperialist' are his own compatriots, — industrial, commercial, agricultural. The Chinaman is the simple tool of the Soviet policy, incapable of apprehending that in this game he is devouring himself, destroying his own substance.

I learn, however, that a journalist has just affirmed in a certain review that Bolshevism in China is a pure figment of the imagination, and that the Soviets, when all is said, are the docile instruments of the Chinese students — the Soviets, whose redoubtable audacity, determination and aggressive imperialism are only too well known.

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Last year these docile instruments quite openly laid their hands on Mongolia, and rule to-day at Urga behind the mask of some Mongolian puppet; they are manœuvring to dominate afresh rich Manchuria, whose great railroad they have again seized.

Yet we are told that Bolshevik influence in China is a myth! The man who can write thus reminds me of some of my pupils at the Imperial School of Medicine which I established in Szechwan (Western China) in 1903. As they were entirely ignorant of all the natural and physical sciences, it was agreed with the authorities that the course of study should last five years, two of which were for preliminary instruction. All the pupils appeared to acquiesce in this programme. But at the end of six months a certain number suddenly disappeared. I learned that these students had themselves opened schools in large towns of Szechwan, where, with the characteristic impudence of the Chinaman, they were giving 'a thorough education,' they said, 'in all the western sciences, including medicine.' And they had pupils too, since the parents, knowing nothing of our sciences, had no means of testing their claim.

So it is with our journalist. After two or three months passed in a Peking hotel, that is to say on the threshold of an immense country which he has never entered, he emits oracular utterances upon an organization so complex as this Chinese organization, whether it be considered from the ethnical or the social and political standpoint.

Are you astonished then that the unfortunate French people are so badly informed? Or that our Press is so

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backward in all that concerns the handling of foreign problems? For this journalist is far from being the only one of his kind, – quite the contrary. To sum up, to-day in China there is chaos – an evolution backwards; no party, no class puts forward any programme whatsoever of reconstruction or of real efficient transformation.

They want to get rid of all ‘Imperialists’ – of English, French, Americans and Japanese. What will be the result? Undoubtedly a new yoke, heavier and more brutal than any other, – that of Moscow, – upheld by a Germany which is resuming its advance towards the East, and judges the present time especially propitious. And who will affirm that Japan, threatened by Young China, will not enter this promising combination? It would then be all over with Chinese independence. That is why I frame the wish that the ancient wisdom of China should resume its rights, that wisdom which I knew and appreciated in my early days in that great country.

DR. A. LEGENDRE

*July 1926.*



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## SOME GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

FOR some twenty years, and especially since the revolution of 1911 which saw the close of the Manchu dynasty and the establishment of the republic, we have been hearing of great changes in China. The Anglo-Saxon world, more particularly America, which had regarded the movement with much favour, rejoiced greatly, and revealed an instant faith, touching if not very reasonable, in the new *régime*. As if a political system could make men, and, in an ancient country where for long centuries absolutism had been the practice both in government and in family life, could create citizens! As if the ideas and the impressions dating from thousands of years could dissolve in a day, and make room for a new civilization fundamentally foreign – the civilization of very advanced peoples, infinitely more so than the Chinese masses!

Is it possible that in China the patriarchal period can be abruptly succeeded by a democratic system? Is it conceivable except as a play of words, the phraseology of politicians who are passing through strange birth-pangs? In biology, the phenomenon of 'mutation' is known to us, and is a reality, but neither in psychology nor in social science has anything of the kind yet been seen.

Hence in the following pages we shall have cause to realize that in order to transform a people, and to effect an organic change in a race, it is not enough to fly the Republican flag in a country, as certain simple-minded



democrats of Europe and Asia have been led to believe. We shall see in the course of this study all the consequences of such a delusion. The facts will be only too plain.

China, of course, bestowed on herself a Parliament. The nature of its proceedings and their mischievous sterility will enlighten us fully on the dangers of such a creation when it is premature and does not harmonize with the stage of development reached by a people.

Moreover, we can sum up in a word the actual state of the new republic born in 1911. It is an anarchy, increasing from year to year. It is a veritable falling back, socially and politically. In almost every province there exists a military dictatorship of the most tyrannous kind. Since the suppression of the Son of Heaven, symbol of all discipline and all morality, we see a great country adrift, an enormous human mass out of action, in search of a new equilibrium.

Does this mean that no change is necessary in China? No, there is no doubt that changes must be made, but they should be slow and gradual; they ought for the most part to follow rather than precede social progress, or the advance of the masses in political knowledge. I may also add that even the economic structure, which is seriously faulty in China, cannot be improved except by a radical change in the mentality of the agricultural classes, both rich and poor – a change all the more important since these classes make up at least 90 per cent. of the whole population.

Now in this world of agriculture it is the traditional belief that 'the shadow of one tree deprives one family

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of a livelihood.' Hence for centuries there has been a systematic massacre of trees throughout this immense territory, both in the plains and in the hills, so that to-day forests have completely disappeared, and brushwood and bushes are rare.

What are the consequences of such an error of judgment? They are terrible – an alternation of drought and flood, with famine established as a perpetual guest in the homes of the Chinese people. In fact, neither noble nor peasant has ever understood the value of the forest; on the contrary, both have always treated it as an enemy.

Induced by Europeans, a few energetic mandarins have attempted reafforestation during recent years, but in the night the peasant goes out to cut down the young trees.

There is, then, nothing to be done so long as there persists this failure to understand the use of the tree.

What can be hoped for in the social and political sphere so long as in the vital question of agricultural production error is so deeply rooted – a most fatal error, since it not only costs at regular intervals millions of human lives, but, by reducing the pittance of the surviving mass, diminishes its vitality also.

This immense territory of great natural wealth is to-day partially ruined; and in no other country is poverty so general. Nevertheless, it is a territory of vast resources, only needing to be better handled, more especially as it is capable of the most varied production, from the mere fact that it extends geographically from the 20th to the 53rd degree of latitude, and

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from the 74th to the 134th degree of longitude, comprising a total area exceeding 4 million square miles. This enormous surface, with the exception of the desert of Turkestan, is everywhere fertile, and can be used for stock-raising where it is not suitable for cultivation. Mongolia, for example, is in no respect a desert region, but can maintain immense herds. Certain parts even supply excellent wheat areas, as recently shown.

Now this enormous territory of varied climates which produces all the cereals and all the nutritious or industrial plants grown in temperate and semi-tropical countries – which produces textiles such as silk and cotton, and yields two harvests a year upon at least half of the arable surface – this favoured territory, I repeat, fails to nourish its population and supply regularly a normal quantity of food adequate to its needs.

You will perhaps say, 'Over-population.' Not so. Europe, smaller in extent by 800,000 square miles, maintains a population of at least 100 millions more than China. Moreover, it must be understood that China does not possess the 400 millions of inhabitants which we have unchangingly ascribed to her for a century. For a population does not remain stationary for a hundred years; it either grows or diminishes.

The statistics which I have been able to assemble prove that the total is greatly exaggerated – by at least a fourth. The demographic and economic facts which I shall cite later to support this assertion will not fail to convince even those geographers who in the absence of exact information continue to set down in their books this total of 400 million Chinese.

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In spite of what I have said of agriculture and the destruction of the forests, some will perhaps find it difficult to understand why there is such terrible poverty in China. As a matter of fact, it does not arise from one kind of prejudice or tradition only. Other causes have operated. Certain philosophic and religious ideas of great antiquity have naturally influenced the family, the individual, and consequently social and economic life. They have even determined its orientation, in a country where change has always been accursed and denounced as a violation of the most sacred traditions.

The Chinaman, gradually worked upon by these ideas, has found them more easy to adopt because they harmonize fully with his biological characteristics – dread of effort and fatalism – the latter a tendency of weak races, who are disquieted by the struggle for life.

Of all the ideas which have fashioned Chinese character, none has had more influence on its development than that of ancestor-worship. It has penetrated into the very fibre of the family, and has dominated it completely. The first duty of a son has always been to look back towards his ancestor's tomb. Any negligence in the performance of rites, and above all any forgetfulness of the foods, drinks and money which should be tendered to the souls of the dead at fixed periods to meet their wants in another world, involve the gravest misfortunes for the family.

For him who wishes to lead a quiet life, to succeed in business, or to have a good harvest, there is only one

method – to satisfy the requirements of the ancestor. Apart from this course only misfortune awaits him.

Is it astonishing, then, that throughout their history the life of the Chinese has been little more than one long meditation upon death?

Is it surprising that the coffin should be the specially precious gift which every good son must offer to his father as soon as he has the means?

We must not, moreover, forget that Confucius bound the Chinaman to the earth, and taught him not to look beyond.

Dominated by such ideas, has it been possible for the Chinaman to see further than his present necessities, the needs of his ancestor and his own? Could any effort directed towards the future be justified in his eyes? With difficulty; in fact, for thousands of years he has lived in the past, and what a past! Read his history, and you will find it hard to believe that he could have endured such sufferings through so many centuries. The famous empire called 'Celestial' has been constantly broken up, – torn into fragments by attacks from outside and interior crises. Never has a country undergone so many revolutions, civil wars and wholesale massacres. Apart from certain brilliant periods, which have been as rare as they were short, the whole history is lamentable and painful. If this worm-eaten empire has survived up to last century, it may be affirmed that its continuance has been due to its great distance from Europe, and to the mutual jealousies of the Powers.

It is important to notice that throughout these long

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centuries of history the Chinese masses have scarcely ever resisted, except when famine, an ever-recurring evil, has at length got the better of their passivity, and roused them in exasperation against their bad shepherds. If this inertia amazes us, then we must look for the deep-seated original cause, not in philosophical or other considerations, but in the racial type itself and its biological significance.

Educational upbringing is only a secondary force, whose action will be of a moderating or intensifying character according to its tendency.

This is a fact of the highest importance in the development of peoples, a fact which is generally ignored, or which is eagerly contradicted in order that we may be more at our ease in worshipping the myth of equality – a myth which does not stand even the most superficial examination of anthropological data.

Consider the Greeks and the Romans; they also made much of ancestor-worship and the cult of the tomb; they made it the base of their whole social system. And yet what vitality we find among these peoples! What a faculty of practical realization! What heights did they not attain, in every manifestation of creative intelligence and of fruitful will-power!

We see thus that it is the racial coefficient which plays the primary part in the development of peoples. The medium must certainly be taken into account, that is to say, the soil, but the important thing is the seed and its germinating quality.

'*Pietas et gravitas.*' These two precepts were the symbols of Roman civilization, and never were pre-

cepts more strictly put into practice. Virtue among them was never an empty word. When it was taught to the plebeian, the intention was not merely to inculcate discipline but to imbue the people with a motive thought, with an ideal made up of dignity and self-respect, so that the public interest might be better served.

Rarely has it been thus in China. The nobles, the *literati*, have indeed preached all the virtues, but have practised them much less. Too often have they furnished a sorry example to the masses, whose morality has accordingly diminished, with the result that mutual distrust is the rule in China.

Listen to what has been said on the subject by Dr. Smith, a very serious writer, who cannot be suspected of partisanship, and who moreover has not been the first to give a similar account of the high mandarin.

'The life of a Chinese governor,' he says, 'abounds in lofty sentiments and vile actions. He orders 10,000 heads to be cut off, and in giving this order he quotes a passage from Mencius upon the sacredness of human life. He puts in his own pocket the money designed to repair the dykes, and deplores the loss caused by the flooding of arable land.'

I, who have lived for many years in intimate contact with Chinese society, find it impossible to contradict such an assertion. It is among the humble in China that one finds most conscience and character.

But I content myself with these general observations, for the chapters which follow will enlighten you fully as to the characteristics of the Chinaman in every sphere, particularly the social and economic.

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What I describe is the real China – such as she has been for thousands of years and still is to-day, away from the Treaty Ports. In spite of certain recent changes of mechanical character, due to the adoption of some of our most useful inventions, socially speaking, the Chinaman may still be said to 'wear the pigtail.'

Nevertheless, education is being modified, and moves more and more in the direction of our sciences, though the results have hitherto been no more than mediocre. I shall speak of them elsewhere, and set forth the facts. For I have been following the movement for twenty years. I have been able to study China at leisure, and in intimate contact with all classes of society from the mandarin to the peasant, or, lower still, to the poor coolie, the pariah of China, who toils along its rough and broken tracks laden like the beast of burden he replaces for want of roads passable to wheeled traffic.

Apart from this intimate contact there is no means of familiarizing oneself with the Asiatic mind and its ways, which are often difficult to interpret. Yet this complexity seems an amusing pastime to many tourists and travellers who, on their return to France, discuss and perorate upon all the problems of immense China, even posing in the Press as experts upon these questions. Not for a moment do they consider whether they have the right thus to lead public opinion astray. Moreover, how do they do their work? With a pot of gum and a pair of scissors, borrowing anywhere without the least scruple.

The study which is to follow should be a useful lesson for every nation.



## THE CHINESE FAMILY

WHILE it may be a commonplace to say that the family is the paramount social unit, the statement is specially applicable to China. This primitive organization forms in China a solid entity, held together by natural and artificial ties. Tradition, religion and law combine to cement its unity and to uphold it. So strong indeed is the Chinese family that it delights in a splendid isolation, depending on its own resources and shunning contact with others. Hence the influences which in other countries lead families to form a larger aggregate and then associate these groups in a State are so weak in China that they can hardly be said to operate, except in societies formed for a special purpose, such as trade guilds composed of those who sell the same goods. Even these guilds remain isolated and do not combine to bring about a reform which would be to their common advantage. Thus all traders and manufacturers have a common interest in the thorough reconstruction of the roads, which are not only inadequate but in a lamentable condition. Yet throughout the ages no combined effort at improvement has ever been attempted. The prime mover in such an innovation would meet with the indifference of corporations less directly interested in the reform, and powerful groups having the ear of the authorities would withhold their help. We have here, together with its specialization in purely literary studies, and the total absence of scientific culture, one of the chief causes which have

kept China in the same position as it stood at its first conquests, and have fixed it in its first commercial and industrial methods. This stagnation has affected all classes, so that an immense nation formed of brilliant elements has become mummified, or rather has for thousands of years lain in a lethargic slumber.

This shy isolation of the family has had the natural consequences. It has stopped the growth of that feeling which inspires a people to muster its forces for the defence of a common inheritance. Patriotism does not exist in China, or rather there is so little of it that it is quite insufficient to organize protection against any enemy. There is no such word in the language, and it requires I know not how many periphrases to convey its meaning to the Chinaman. Even then one is not sure that he understands. Far removed from his mind is the idea of a larger whole which may call for the renunciation of family interests and even for the sacrifice of oneself for the sake of others who, though living at a distance, belong to the same community. Can he grasp the idea that he who lives in the south will suffer from the rebound of the invasion of the northern provinces, that he will suffer because of the sufferings of his brother whom he does not know, whose interests are not his? No, he is incapable of entertaining such a strange idea; he will listen to it only to contradict. This I frequently noticed in the Russo-Japanese War. In Szechwan had you questioned any person whatsoever in the street, and asked his opinion on the calamities that were crushing his compatriots in Manchuria, he would have replied that such affairs were no concern of his.

## MODERN CHINESE CIVILIZATION

China thus does not form what we call one great family, united in effort and the need of mutual defence. There exists only the individual surrounded by a little group of which he is chief. There are no citizens in China. What need for wonder then that the Great Empire has always offered such feeble resistance to European aggression, that the Colossus has proved so weak!

What, then, is this Chinese family with its marvellous organization and its powerful self-government? It is summed up in the father, a sort of demi-god, whose authority is absolute; not only can he sell his children for slaves, but he has the right to put them to death; it is easy to see that his authority may become tyranny.

It is true that a new and more humane code has been decreed of late years, but it is not in force.

The mother is a negligible quantity; she does not count; her power over her child, her son in particular, is very limited. As soon as he reaches the age of three or four years, he is under the orders of his father alone; his mother has no longer the right to whip him, and his reign of little god-tyrant can begin. The daughter has no such privilege; she will be a slave all her life, with no will of her own, no influence, systematically kept in crass ignorance, relegated to the society of the female slaves. From birth the abyss which separates the male infant from the other is expressed trenchantly in a popular saying. 'What is it? A pearl or a tile?' is the question asked by the neighbour of the man whose wife has just given birth to a child.

The 'pearl' is of course the son, and the 'tile' the

daughter. The mother herself is never proud of the birth of a girl, so strong are the prejudices against her. Her distress is a feeling of resentment rather than of pity, — resentment that she has brought into the world a little despised creature without prestige in the family circle rather than the higher emotion of maternal pity, which foresees the miserable destiny of effacement and humiliation in store for this little one during the whole of her life. The mother herself will often be her daughter's worst tyrant. She will take vengeance on her for the son's contempt of her authority, for her grievances as a wife, and her sufferings as a daughter-in-law.

The sufferings of the daughter-in-law! They are great indeed, out of all proportion to the annoyances which our French women may have to endure from a mother-in-law. Treated with indifference by the family as a whole, she is the slave of her husband's mother, who puts her to the hardest work of the house if she is of lowly rank, or exacts from her the servility of a slave if she belongs to the mandarin class. She is at times subjected to such outrage, such cruel treatment, that in despair she is driven to suicide. This is frequently the end of young Chinese wives, and can be accounted for by the complete absence of any support and consolation in those about her. Her husband himself generally does not think of defending her, and all the less if his father shows any hostility to the young woman, because perhaps in a moment of anger she has let fall some not very respectful words about him. It even happens that the father is the first to slander his daughter-in-law, charging her with misdeeds in the presence

of his son, and justifying thus the rigours of her mother-in-law. He acts in revenge, for spite, because the girl has rebuffed his advances to her. A case like this is evidently fairly common, since it has passed into a proverb, 'Old bulls like to eat the tender grass.' This expression is not used in a general sense, at any rate in Szechwan, but is applied only to fathers-in-law.

The young wife is panic-stricken, not daring to confide even in her husband, for fear of being accused of falsehood by the seducer, whose position and authority and the respect which surrounds him at every moment of life will make it easy for him to deny the accusation, above all when it comes from a creature so contemptible as a daughter-in-law. For the paternal authority is terrifying indeed! M. Bons d'Anty told us that in Yunnan he had seen a drama enacted, difficult for us with our different ideas of family life to conceive of. A young wife, exposed to the constant persecutions of her father-in-law, at last so far lost control of herself as to abuse him. He called his son as witness of the indignity, and ordered him to get rid of this shrew who had failed in the duty of filial piety. The son on that occasion refused, but the same thing happening a few days later he dared no longer disobey the command of his parent, and seizing an axe, smashed in his wife's skull. This act of savagery went unpunished, for if the mandarin had intervened and tried to bring the murderer to justice, he would have provoked protests from every family in the community, and roused a general insurrection. The whole population would have risen to snatch out of prison a man whose act

could defy all human law as long as it avenged an outrage on filial piety.

As the young wife finds herself defenceless against the ills that assail her, and as her education, teaching absolute submission, has not prepared her to struggle, she has no other hope than to seek in death the end of her sufferings. She goes the more quickly to suicide as she knows nothing of life, and has since her birth lived like a recluse in the interior of the house, even though she belongs to a high class of society. The streets even are unknown to her; she has passed through them at rare intervals, shut up in her chair with the curtains carefully closed, on visits to relatives or friends. She has never been inside a shop to buy little feminine trifles, or to order a dress that she fancies. For her there are no holidays in the country, no excursions, no merry picnics, no happy life in the open air. Engrossed in some embroidery work in the inner apartments of the house, the young girl does not even seek from time to time to escape the close atmosphere of her room. She does not know what it means to breathe freely in a wide space. She has never dreamed of the country and of wide horizons; the garden of the family is the secluded spot from which she can gaze on the skies, if such a spectacle is capable of interesting her. And yet she goes there but rarely. Her walks are very short, for her shapeless and tortured feet, causing a latent suffering ever ready to turn into actual pain, soon compel her to a fatal repose. Young girls of Europe, always aspiring after more liberty, rejoice in the lot that has fallen to you, and if to some of you

your freedom appears too limited, think then of your sisters of the Far East, and compare their fate to yours.

The young Chinese wife commits suicide by hanging herself. But in disappearing, she knows that she has made vengeance certain, and that her cruel adopted family will soon expiate all the ill-treatment they have inflicted on her. Her death is the signal for the intervention of her own family. A suit begins, and the lawyers, a redoubtable scourge, more frightful in China than in any other place, descend upon the house of the father-in-law. For him it is ruin. The magistrate and his satellites will loose hold of their prey only when it is entirely consumed. Hence one great preoccupation of the mother-in-law is a strict supervision of her son's wife to prevent her suicide. If the latter as a result of harsh treatment has to take to her bed, and feeble in health succumbs to a malady whose end has been hastened by cruelty, her family is excluded from all ground of action, as long as the other can produce numerous medical prescriptions showing that many drugs have been administered. In such a case death is considered natural and no responsibility can be placed on anyone.

Young wives who commit suicide are naturally the exception, but it is painful to have to admit that these women, who as daughters-in-law have suffered ill-treatment, inflict as mothers the same outrages and the same sufferings on their daughters and daughters-in-law.

There exists a physical torture very easy to apply in China; it consists in drawing more tightly than usual the bands which wrap the small foot of a wretched

child in process of mutilation. In the street I have sometimes been present at such a scene, and truly few things are so distressing as to see a little girl writhing with pain, while the mother draws the bandages ever tighter. One could not be deceived; it was not a mother endeavouring to endow her child with an irresistible attraction, but a harpy, enraged and yelling like a wild beast, whose cruelty was only the more provoked by the resistance she encountered.

Happily there are exceptions to the general contempt for the weaker sex, and to the brutal treatment which is its frequent result. I have known families where mother and daughters maintained a share of independence and authority, and the consequence was peace and harmony in the home, and the absence of all behaviour calculated to wound the dignity of woman. One must hope that such manners, more conformable to higher social ideals, will develop more and more.

The barbarous custom of mutilating the foot tends not to disappear but to become rarer. High mandarins have given the example. But it is easy to understand that this custom will long resist all efforts at reform, since it has become the most characteristic mark of beauty in the Chinese woman. The foot of the European woman seems to the Chinaman the last word in deformity. Nothing can prevent or more easily break off a marriage than any deception in the size of the future wife's foot, and the realization by the would-be bridegroom that the 'golden lily' is of larger dimensions than those inferred from the examination of the lady's shoe.



The position of inferiority assigned to the Chinese woman as compared with the man at first surprises the European, and causes him to formulate certain criticisms which are derived less from a rigorous and thorough examination of the causes of this inferiority than from his prejudices against a state of affairs obviously at variance with our traditional ideas of woman's rôle. But before talking loudly of Chinese blunders in this respect it would be prudent to ascertain what is the origin of these social usages which are not peculiar to China but are spread throughout the Orient.

The Chinese philosophers and instructors, after having studied woman and carefully taken into account her good qualities and defects, thought it well to be on their guard, and to take certain precautions. Their estimate of the situation was prudent, but they exaggerated the precautions which they thought it necessary to take against a certain lack of physical and moral equilibrium which they had observed in her. Since they had weighed her and found her too light and too frivolous, they concluded that self-control and reason could not be the predominant qualities in a creature supremely emotional and susceptible, and that it was accordingly necessary to keep her under strict guardianship. Harmonizing their action with the rigorous deductions of exact observation, they decided that servitude was the logical and normal condition of existence for a woman. They did not see that in so doing they were injuring her moral and physical health, and they did not guess that by prac-

tising too much restriction they were aggravating her faults, and enfeebling her good qualities, thus depriving themselves of an ally always valuable when wisely led. It is into the opposite error that we Europeans have fallen, creating gradually an artificial being further and further removed from true womanhood, a being reduced to the functions of a doll and of a false idol, who is decked out, to whom incense is burnt, a doll who too often becomes a tyrant, noisy and impudent in the exercise of her power, and who knows neither rule nor measure.

The young wife's lot improves a little after she has given birth to a son. A son brings general rejoicing; the ancestors leap for gladness in their tombs, and the father is now secure of religious rites after his death, he knows that his after-life will be fortunate, and that his offspring will give scrupulous heed to his wants in the other world.

The daughter cannot be the priestess of such a religion; she is deemed unworthy. Therefore her birth is never hailed with joy; the head of the family, egotistically absorbed by his future in the tomb, regards her arrival with indifference. She will grow up simply to marry, and produce children, her true function being to furnish society with celebrants for ancestor-worship. As a wife she will await in anguish the coming of the little pontiff, and when he is born she will for long years have no other interest than to see him grow up for as early a marriage as possible. For then, as an alleviation to her lot, some fragment of authority is hers; she has now the right to govern the new bride,

to impose her will upon her, to shift the household burdens on to her shoulders, to make her suffer all the petty cruelties of which up to that moment she has had full measure.

In every poor family the birth of a daughter is regarded as a calamity, an intolerable burden. A father is not asked how many daughters he has, but rather what is the number of useless mouths that he has to support. Moreover, at certain periods of the year, when the stocks are exhausted and the harvest has proved to be meagre, it comes natural to him some evening to leave one of his daughters in a neighbouring field, stripped of all clothing. If she is only a few days or a few months old, the sharp cold of the night will quickly kill her; if not, the pigs on their morning round will finish the deed of cruelty or helplessness committed the evening before. In the same way the artisan will fling his child into a street corner.

I have intentionally written 'helplessness,' for poverty is so terrible in China, and altruistic sentiment, by reason of the general wretchedness, is so little developed, that parents are driven to renounce the idea of bringing up all their children, and the despised daughter is always the one to be sacrificed.

Confronted with such acts, European nations are quick to give up to general contempt and indignation a people which forgets the first and most sacred of duties. They forget that among them the deadly work is otherwise accomplished, but is not less opposed to humanitarian principles and has the same consequences for society. The Chinese mother has the same feelings

as the European mother, and though in certain circumstances she commits an act of obvious cruelty, she has no intention of doing wrong; there is no more food for the child; it must die of famine. It would perish in the hut if a superstitious fear did not drive her to expose it outside. Great misfortune might fall on the family if the victim succumbed inside the house. It must be said very emphatically that it is an absolute and cruel necessity which drives parents to this murderous exposure.

The economic life of the old empire is so precarious, those of its resources now exploited are so restricted in quantity, that the majority of its inhabitants live from hand to mouth at the mercy of an atmospheric disturbance which may bring drought or excessive rain. Nowhere will our philanthropists find a more heartbreaking destitution to relieve. Though there may be extreme poverty in some countries of the West, at least people do not die of hunger here as they do in the Far East. And mark how virtue is always rewarded. If the Western nations will assure the Chinaman's daily bread by teaching him how to exploit the wealth existing in his land, wealth of which he is now ignorant, they will increase their own resources, they will promote the comfort of their own people. Proof of my words will be found later when I come to the study of the economic question.

It is not the daughter only who is a useless mouth; there is also the old man, who undergoes the same fate as she. One winter evening when he is absent from the house, he is 'forgotten.' To the desperate

appeals of his quavering voice the door does not open; he dies. There was no more rice, no more maize cake to spare for him, not even the meagre slice of salted vegetable. It is fate, one can but bow to it, and the relatives feel no disgrace, and do not realize their barbarity. Thus ends sometimes, very rarely, let us hope, a being so respected in the Middle Empire — an old man, who, in a family where material needs were assured, would be surrounded with veneration and kindly attentions.

Before hurling our thunders against the barbarity of the Chinaman, let us analyse the facts, and consider the lamentable economic position of an old nation, slumbering in the routine of ages, and thus condemned to the direst necessities. The evil is curable; it is to be hoped that the white race will some time forget the jealousies which divide its nations to come to the help of a very aged branch of the human family, hardened and driven from the right path by misfortunes beyond its endurance.

When I have explained what a gulf separates the husband from the wife, even at the hours when the different members of the family unite for meals, I shall have finished my description of the Chinese home. At no moment of her life can the mother sit with her children at the table of her lord and master. He eats alone, without ever deigning to share his repast with his wife; even the sons are not invited to his table. The intimate daily gatherings of the family in our country, the talk of the evening after the day's work, when father and mother and children question one

another, express their opinions, and discuss their plans for the future, this confidence and mutual support do not exist in China. There is strict separation between those who ought to be mingled in an affectionate equality and form a single soul with aspirations in common.

What follows from such a state of things? The result is that filial respect in China is made up of fear rather than of true affection – that the child cannot regard his father with the tenderness and unselfishness which can be seen in families of the white race. It has been said that fear is the beginning of wisdom; that is true, but it will be noticed that the proverb is far from alleging that fear is the whole of wisdom. It stops in time, permitting us to infer that a natural spontaneous affection, free from all constraint, will produce more devotion and more fidelity than the filial piety imposed on the young Chinaman. This deduction is so true that the moment one studies the family organization of the Celestial Empire at close quarters, it becomes evident that this paternal authority based on fear and on the calculated prestige of strict isolation has had to be solidly buttressed by legislation to produce the expected affect. The most terrible penalties were formulated against the unnatural son who fell short in the most sacred of duties, the adoration of the god who had procreated him. Taking into account the horrible character of these penalties and their refined cruelty, it is logical to infer that the reign of paternal tyranny was not established without collision and revolt, for all exaggeration of authority is

inevitably followed by reaction. The legislator, however, triumphed over the last show of opposition, and one day definitely confirmed the absolute power of the father over the family. The Chinaman submitted to the law, and departures from the old order are now rare. No race submits so passively as his to a yoke which it has once been constrained to accept. Even in the future, attempts to throw off the yoke will be rare.

To give an idea of the frightful severity of the punishments which fall upon the son whom madness has driven to attempt the life of his father, it will be sufficient to mention that the torture of the 'hundred thousand fragments' was invented for the punishment of such a crime, and that the city in which the foul murder had been committed was condemned to disappear – to be razed to the ground.

## THE CHINESE HOUSE

IN describing the Chinese house of the present day, we describe the same house that has been built for thousands of years; everything is unchangeable in China, the dwelling like all else. There are not thirty-six types of houses, with styles to correspond with different epochs; no, the type evolved does not present any variety in its main lines, and when the rich Chinaman builds his *kong kouan* (town house) or country mansion he will not be able to obtain from his architect a design which differs from that of his neighbour. You do not see in the suburbs of any town in the empire that variety of mansions, villas, bungalows and cottages found in our country, in which the taste and originality of each owner have been given free expression. All the rich are housed in the same way, and the dwelling of the poor man is simply a copy of that of the rich, only on a smaller scale. The residence goes more or less further back, its wings are more or less extended, the blocks of buildings separated by as many interior courts may be more or less numerous according to the magnitude of the site, but you will find everywhere not only the primitive plan but the exact reproduction of the existing model.

The materials employed are brick, pure clay, or clay mixed with earth, which forms, with a wattling of bamboo, what we call 'mudwall'; if bamboo is not used, you have then an earthen wall, such as can be seen in some rural regions of France.



Stone is very rarely used; sometimes, for the foundations, but never for the construction of walls. Marble is still less made use of; I never saw in Chengtufu, the capital of a province vaster than France, a single private mansion where a morsel of the precious limestone was introduced into the building, though it abounds in the valley of the Yang-Tse and the mountains which enclose some of its tributaries. For the roof, one sees tiles everywhere; only in the country thatched houses sometimes occur, but very rarely – more rarely than in Europe.

I noticed of late that in Szechwan, though it is from all points of view the most favoured part of Chinese territory, brick, which allows of true building, even with thin walls, and provides a comfortable dwelling, is less and less in use; it is replaced by wood and mud-wall, which are so much cheaper. The reason is that China, in contrast with peoples of the white race whose comfort is continually increasing by means of the rational and scientific use of their resources, is becoming poorer and poorer, and her destitution, which I have already described as frightful, will grow worse unless Europe comes to her aid, and, vanquishing the routine of centuries, leads the Chinaman to the adoption of methods less superannuated and less destructive.

Brick, then, is employed more and more rarely, for it has become too dear for the resources of the mass of people nowadays. Structures of wood and mud do not last, it is true; but as neither State nor private individuals ever have any ready money to spare, they content themselves with building for the time being.

## THE CHINESE HOUSE

Iron is very abundant all over China, but it is not used in house-building; it would, however, very advantageously replace the green wood which they employ, and which is becoming scarcer and scarcer, and consequently dearer. But to employ iron they would have to instal foundries with plant, for these do not yet exist in the empire.

What, then, is the Chinese house like, and in what order are its rooms arranged?

To give as exact a description as possible, I shall take as a type the *kong kouan*, or private mansion, in which are combined all the perfections of domestic building. It is composed of three blocks of one-storied buildings (*san ichong tang*), situated one behind the other, and separated by two interior paved courtyards. On the right and left of these courtyards are buildings uniting the different blocks, the *ichen fang*; they form what we may call the wings (*eul fang*) or the ears of the mansions, *eul* signifying 'ear.' Very broad gates separate the principal quarters and the courtyards from each other. These gates have side openings for ordinary everyday traffic; the great leaves fly apart only for official receptions or for guests held in special honour.

The block at the far end is the most important; it comprises generally a large central reception room, and on each side two other rooms which lodge the family, especially the women, who are always relegated to the most retired part of the house. Besides the great room, *ta tang*, there are little reception rooms on the wings, the *siao tang*, generally two in number. The dimensions of these rooms are small, 12 to 15 feet long, 9 to 12

feet broad, and 9 feet high. The other rooms destined for lodging members of the family or for their work or for the servants are of the same dimensions, or rather smaller. There are some very tiny rooms, but quite large enough for Chinese ideas; they have a current saying, 'However rich a man, however sumptuous his palace, a room of 8 feet square is quite large enough for him to sleep in.' There is generally flooring or paving in the principal rooms, but ceilings are rarer. When a ceiling exists, it is often cut quite through at the middle and at the sides, which is an advantage in summer, but makes the rooms bitterly cold in the winters of the Central and Northern provinces.

In designating the central room of the principal block as a reception room, I have been supposing that the master of the house has a *se tang*, or ancestors' temple, built outside in the garden in the middle of a clump of bamboos, for instance, but that is not always the case; if not, then this central room must not be called reception-room but *se tang*, the sanctuary, which the family visits regularly to carry to the ancestors the tribute of adoration which is their due. The entrance to this holy place is round, I do not know why. The religious tribute brought to the ancestors is never neglected by the Chinese, for on it rests the whole edifice of his life's happiness and prosperity. The day in which the manes of the *sien jen* cease to receive veneration and their due share of offerings, the ruin of the sacrilegious family will be at hand. Thus the sanctuary is rigorously maintained. But the ancestor is not the only power feared; there is also the dragon, he who

## THE CHINESE HOUSE

hurls into the air good and bad influences, from which riches or poverty, success or bankruptcy emanate. To keep out evil influences, a very high wall is always built opposite the entrance gate of the mansions; you will not fail to be impressed by its massive appearance every time you pass one of these mansions.

In continuing our examination we notice that the lighting of the house leaves much to be desired, as the number of windows is insufficient; there are some opening on the interior courts, but none on the outer side which looks upon the open space surrounding the buildings. All the rooms are so gloomy in consequence that to a European eye they look like cellars. The windows are not like ours; they are openings furnished with gratings on which transparent paper is pasted, for glass is unknown in China except to a few mandarins or merchants who have lived on the coast in the large port towns, and have brought some to adorn their *kong kouang*. Venetian shutters are also unknown in the interior of China.

I stated that the various blocks of buildings were of only one storey; at Chengtufu, however, I have seen mansions surmounted by an attic, not a real storey. The reason for this sort of construction is the necessity for having some means of escape from the yearly floods which invade all the lower parts of the town. As a general rule, moreover, every Chinese house has its courts inundated whenever the rain lasts for some time; this is because they do not trouble to give the ground a slope for drainage, and their system of conduits or simple gutters is reduced to practically nothing.

To the whole question of getting rid of flood water,

so important to the European, even apart from the question of hygiene, the Chinaman is completely indifferent, primitive creature as he is in some aspects.

Though the mansion occasionally has an attic, it never, on the contrary, possesses a cellar, and its floors almost touch the soil, making the rooms very damp. The Chinaman has never felt the need of building a cellar for two reasons – first, because his ideas of hygiene are most elementary, and, secondly, because, unlike ourselves, he has no store of provisions to preserve from year to year. He has no beer and no wine to house and to mature, no spirit, happily, or very little, only a few jars, his ordinary drink being tea. He has no reserves of food, as he lives from hand to mouth. The shopkeepers themselves have their shops very meagrely stocked, possessing only what is strictly required for current sale.

The *kong kouan* is wanting in one object which the European considers indispensable – a fireplace; there is no such thing. At Chengtufu, where the cold is very biting during several months of the year, there is no means of keeping warm, for want of a fire and the necessary chimney. The only apparatus for warming sometimes used is the *ho pen*, a sort of brazier, which burns in the middle of the room, and consumes either ordinary coal or charcoal. In France, such an arrangement would be dangerous and lead to accident; not so in China, where the doors and windows are badly fitted, and there are many cracks and openings where there ought not to be any.

In the North they have the *kang*, a bed of masonry furnished with a furnace, permitting direct heating.

## THE CHINESE HOUSE

There is little to say on the decorative side of the *kong kouan*; it is a simple primitive building, occasionally gilded, or adorned with characterless mouldings. Carving properly so called is found only in temples.

To sum up, the Chinese house supposed to be luxurious possesses little comfort; badly lighted, too much or too little ventilated, very damp, of dubious cleanness, it is unhealthy, and has none of the many advantages which science has conferred on our modern dwellings. It is far inferior to the houses of our ancestors, buildings constructed hundreds of years ago, which at least have solid thick walls, affording shelter from cold and heat. In short, one cannot better characterize the Chinese house than by calling it a 'barrack' or a 'bandbox.'

What is most astonishing is that the same type is employed in entirely different climates – tropical in the South, glacial in the Northern provinces.

Having described the most complete type of the Chinese house, it will be easy to recognize the derivative forms as soon as one knows that they are all reductions from the big model, without any variation, from the house with two blocks to the house with a single block, and from that to the simple hut which reproduces just one room of the *kong kouan* described.

As for the temples, which represent the great period of Chinese architecture, they are indeed beautiful and often elegant, with pavilions whose graceful roofs are supported by sculptured columns of great delicacy. But looked at as a whole you do not find the grandeur, the boldness of conception and execution, the majesty of our cathedrals. The chief building of a pagoda, with

its slender column of stone or lacquered wood directly supporting a superstructure never higher than 25 to 30 feet, cannot be compared with the imposing mass of the Christian temple, whose massive piers, united by great arches, support a new edifice rising 60 feet high. The graceful bell towers of Chinese construction are also left far behind by our towers and steeples, marvels of strength and beauty, where stone, vanquished and tamed, is moulded like supple clay to every caprice of the genius of sculpture.

You will not find, moreover, in China those great architectural works raised in the course of ages for kings and peoples by sublime artists, whose grandiose ideas were boldly executed at a time when the resources of modern architecture were unknown to them. If Greek architecture be compared with the most admired creations of the Celestial Empire, one is quick to perceive that the Chinaman can present nothing so grand, so powerful – nothing immortal. And if we look further back to the descriptions which Chinese poets and historians have written of the works of their potentates, what is there to equal the marvels of Nineveh and Babylon? What is the famous Great Wall, regarded as an architectural feat? Nothing but a big, high wall, very, very long. And what of the irrigation works, the Grand Canal? They are simply monuments of patience. Intelligence, originality of conception, real science – these had no part in them. Immense herds of labourers, a whole people transformed into navvies, digging painfully along boundless plains, that is all; – muscles, but no brains.

## THE CHINESE CITY

I CANNOT do better than take, as an example of the Chinese city, the capital of Szechwan, Chengtufu, where I lived for many years studying it at leisure. With its population made up of elements from every province, it is a good type of the urban agglomerations of the old Empire. It is a fine city, which at one period was raised to the rank of capital of the Empire.

I must say a few words about Loui Cheng, or the Tartar quarter, which though it has disappeared since the revolution of 1911 has its interest from the point of view of history and human evolutions. We shall see how a warlike race such as the Manchus can rapidly degenerate when taken away from its geographical and social environment. It is a lesson for all peoples to meditate on.

The town of Chengtufu is surrounded by a vast wall almost uniformly square, 25 to 30 feet high and as broad, and  $12\frac{1}{2}$  miles in extent, built of superb bricks very much larger than those which we usually make. Brick is of all building materials the most used by the son of Han.<sup>1</sup> Even if he has excellent stone under his hand, he never uses it except in such structures as bridges, where large blocks are necessary. In every place where he finds clay he makes his favourite building material, the brick which his far-back ancestors must have invented on the first land they occupied on

<sup>1</sup> The Chinese have adopted the name from their great Han Dynasty.



the shores of the Hoang-ho, where stone is not to be found.

The flat summit of the wall is so wide and at the same time so level and well paved with broad bricks that it is possible to ride a bicycle on it. Nearly at the middle of the north, south, east and west faces of the wall are gateways of colossal dimensions, veritable tunnels 30 feet in length, the vault of which is not less than 25 feet above the ground. These gates bear the names of the four cardinal points of the compass—East Gate (*tong men*), West Gate (*si men*), North Gate (*pe men*) and South Gate (*lan men*). Each gateway forms an enormous semicircular mass of masonry, projecting out from the vertical plane of the walls. In the middle of this mass rises a one-storied bastion of very solid construction, whose façade and cornices are adorned with symbolic beasts in sculptured stone, recalling those which are to be seen upon the walls of our mediæval cathedrals.

At the four corners of the town are found immense stretches of grassland, green throughout the year, which serve as parades or drilling grounds. These parades are not, moreover, the only spaces in the city not built upon. A considerable portion of the area enclosed by the walls is used for market gardening, which has always been carried out on a very large scale in fortified towns, in anticipation of the sieges which they may have to sustain. I reckon that in Chengtufu not less than a third of the total land is thus cultivated.

Of the four quarters into which the town is divided, the most important and the most remarkable is the

Tartar quarter, more often called the Tartar Camp — *Loui Cheng* or *Mancheng*.

This Camp occupies the west part of the town; it has its own enclosing wall, which, however, merges on the outside into the great wall itself. It constitutes, in reality, a sort of *enclave*, separated from the rest of the town by a vast interior wall, the two ends of which curve slightly before backing up against the common rampart. It communicates with the city by four great gates which close every evening at sundown, thus isolating the Manchu conquerors. If a revolt or disorder of any kind broke out in Chengtufu, the Tartar Camp would take no notice and would be completely indifferent. Never would it intervene with its intrepid horsemen and archers, formerly so valiant, to-day fallen so low, since they deserted their steppes and the immense plains of Manchuria and Mongolia to occupy China and live in Capua. Repose has emasculated them, and they are at the present time no more than a shadow of the famous warriors whose hordes rode invincible across the whole of Asia, and overran half Europe. Shut up behind their walls, they would let the Chinamen cut each other's throats; they would lend no aid to the Viceroy Governor and his troops. The Viceroy had no authority over the Tartars; he had no power to call up the clans, the various 'Banners' under which the warriors were ranged. One man only commanded them at his will, the Tsïang-Kuin, the Tartar Marshal, delegate of the Son of Heaven, his true representative in the capital, invested with a part of the imperial omnipotence. He was charged by the Court of Peking to

observe and check all the high administrative acts of the Viceroy and his Ministers. He made them the subject of special reports, sent direct to the Emperor by his own couriers.

This was the precaution taken by the Manchu Dynasty to make its authority secure in the Empire. All the provincial capitals had their Tartar marshals to supervise the high mandarins, who were Chinamen, and thus prevent any attempt at rebellion. It must be realized, however, that the domination of the victorious Manchu thus exercised in every province rested on no solid foundation. But tradition is so strong in China and passive obedience, or rather absence of resistance, so astonishingly great that, in spite of the hate and contempt which the Chinaman professes for the Manchu, he never stirred, and never sought to shake off his yoke. Some hundreds of thousands of Manchus kept him, the great civilized Chinaman, in subjection, driving him where they would. He bore every outrage, even heard himself called 'the slave of the Tartar,' *lou tsai*, of all insults the most stinging; and all that he did was to bow the head. It was necessary that foreigners should come to his help and promote the revolution of 1911 to put an end to his servitude.

The Loui Cheng is very regularly built; it contains three great roads (or boulevards, if you like, though narrower than those we are accustomed to see in our towns) orientated north to south, parallel to each other, and intersected at right angles by a series of cross-roads, also always exactly parallel. The great central avenue opens at its southern extremity into a horseshoe

shape, such as I have not seen in any other country. The descendants of the Tartar hordes to whom the horse of the steppe was at once fortune and the means of activity have reproduced in those towns in which they have settled the shape of the object which allowed their coursers to tread any soil with impunity, in the great rides which they achieved for the conquest of Asia. In the hollow of the horseshoe is built the palace of the *Tsang-Kuin*, the Tartar Marshal, with its numerous dependencies. It is entered by monumental doors on which are painted the *men chen*, or gods of the gate, of gigantic dimensions. The great courtyard in front of the building is grass-grown, and no one takes the trouble to weed it. The buildings themselves are in a state of extreme dilapidation, so badly kept in repair that the Marshal and his court are barely sheltered from the wind and rain. What is most remarkable in the whole building are the entrance gates and the venerable trees which surround the enclosing wall. The whole extent of the palace, including courtyards and gardens, is not more than five acres. The outskirts are dreary and lifeless; there is no one to be seen except from time to time a few soldiers with their red waistcoats (*hao koua*), dirty and torn, who form a sort of guard of honour, or rather police post.

I used to pass there very often on my walks, and I had plenty of time to examine these warriors. Some were very young, sixteen to eighteen years of age, and some very old, long past their fifties. Some were one-eyed, and some bandy-legged; in short, such brilliant specimens of soldiers are to be seen only in China.

They belonged to the Viceroy, for the Tartar never mounts guard.

The central avenue is paved with large stones, with a track in the middle. If the paving had been done with care, the street would have a fine appearance and would be agreeable for the pedestrian; unhappily it was carelessly laid, and the general levelling is most faulty.

The secondary streets, at right angles to the great arterial roads, run straight as a line. They are bordered with fine trees alternating with clumps of bamboo, behind which are screened the Tartar houses. The trees are not planted in the road, but in the compounds of the houses. There are chestnut trees and yews of great size, walnuts whose large branches extend so far that they often cover a surface of nearly 50 square yards. There are pears, apples, plums, cherries and apricots in nearly every garden. The most curious of these trees is a cherry which never fruits but yields many superb flowers, the corolla triple and quadruple. Among scented and ornamental plants you may notice great magnolias with large white or bright pink flowers, and many varieties of the camellia, which is the favourite flower of the Tartar ladies, who wear one in their hair all the flowering season. Young and old, ugly and pretty, they all stick a camellia in their chignons, and walk about the streets thus adorned. I may also mention rose-trees, jessamines, gardenias, myrtles, privets, etc.

This wild profusion of trees and plants gives to the Tartar camp the appearance of a wood, or rather a park, 2 miles long by 1 mile broad. In the summer the

coolest and most delicious shade is to be found there, enlivened by the song of innumerable birds, some of which are in no way inferior to our nightingales and blackbirds. There was one corner in particular which we greatly preferred; it was crossed by a pretty brook drawn from a small arm of the Min, which passed through the great wall by a tunnel hollowed out for the purpose, bathed the southern half of the Camp, and escaped from the town by the north-east. It was bordered by grassy slopes, trees and evergreen bushes, the most beautiful adornment of its banks. Poplars and aspens, particularly, flourished on its slopes, giving shade to the clear water. There in summer one found complete quiet and delicious coolness after the fatigues of the day. We came on horseback, and while our animals grazed on the banks, we followed the stream on foot, walking sometimes as far as a ravishing little pagoda, with its front ornamented with symbolic figures and with charmingly elegant little bell turrets, nestling under the finest trees of the Camp, – sometimes directing our steps to the parade ground of the Tartar 'Banners,' an immense grassy space where beneath the high wall their coursers gambolled. These animals presented a sharp contrast to the mounts of the conquering Manchus of days gone by; nearly all thin, lame and languid, they were no longer good for anything but to carry a valet behind his master's chair on ceremonial visits.

Besides the river, there are also in the Camp numerous ponds, on the surface of which float the famous lotus lilies with their lovely corollas, so celebrated by the poets of the Flowery Kingdom, and so often repro-

duced in the pictures of its artists. When these graceful flowers disappear, the pond looks like nothing but an ugly sheet of dirty, yellow, impure water, the favourite haunt of the nymphs – mosquitoes, which swarm on the banks. Were it not for the great bamboos which encircle these stinking pools, one would hardly recognize in these nooks any of the poetry which the Chinaman professes to meet there. A pond, in short, however tiny, with its artificial rocks of vague and undecisive form, is the grand *motif* of decoration in a Chinese garden.

This petty counterfeiting of nature is really incomprehensible to those who admire her as she ought to be admired. He who thus makes a travesty of her cannot love her; besides, if he were not quite indifferent to beauty unadorned, he would go to gaze on her in her real setting – which he never does. When he leaves the town, the Chinaman shuts himself up in his chair, and the most striking landscapes seem to leave him uninterested. He prefers the ugly miniature laid out in his garden.

I have stated the extent of the Tartar city; its population was estimated at about 10,000 inhabitants. The Emperor supplied their every want. Every month all the Tartar families received a ration of rice and other provisions considered necessary for their upkeep. The adult members of the families, men and women, lived in the most complete and degrading idleness. The men were to be seen standing on the threshold of their doors, gazing vacantly into space, or smoking and chatting with their neighbours. They had ceased to ride, except

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a few valets charged with the duty of couriers to the Emperor. Their favourite amusement was to breed birds, for whom they had a real passion. We used to see them nearly every day on the river banks, or in the shady lanes, or on the slopes of the fortifications, carrying on the palm of their hand a little cage often finely carved, inside which was perched a little singing bird. In summer the cage is furnished with a curtain to protect the little creature from heat and intense light; in winter, it is slipped into a box with moving panels which keep out the cold, and at the same time admit a little light. These men in the prime of life spent thus whole days walking about with their precious cages on their palms. And as the cherished bird has still a marked preference for the living insects on which he fed before his capture, his master, the descendant of a fierce Tartar warrior, to-day with admirable patience and condescension glides cautiously along the walls to seize adroitly with his chopsticks the most agile and the most wily insects, and bear them to the little gaping beak. And if, when the morsel is greedily swallowed, the 'precious jewel' flaps its wings and gleefully trills, the Manchu, bursting with solemn joy, utters a sonorous guffaw, the echo of which might disturb the ancestral ghosts, who would turn in their graves with shame. Whereas formerly these warriors of old ran swift as lightning, fierce as thunder, upon all the roads of the world, cutting down, beating down the most redoubtable of their foes, their descendants to-day are taming birds, and the victims which they slay are worms and insects.



In the afternoon when I went for my walk round the Camp, I used to meet in the neighbourhood of the gates where the sellers of victuals, of *lin soui* (tit-bits – bits of meat and vegetables), took up their stand, big strong-looking youths, real Northern Manchus, who were buying little savouries to eat with their ration of rice. They used to walk away with the slow march of cattle, carrying suspended at the end of a string a slender packet of *lin soui*, – a thin slice of bacon, or a little portion of cabbage, or a carrot or two. Round their homes, however, by the side of the pleasure garden, there is generally a large space of arable land where they could easily grow vegetables, water being plentiful everywhere; but they leave it waste; no one touches it. All the people in the Camp prefer to content themselves with the meagre ration of the Emperor, too meagre even for common soldiers, rather than increase it by any labour whatsoever. The only land under cultivation in the Tartar town, so fertile that it yields an enormous quantity of vegetables of all kinds, is worked by the Chinese; for never will a Manchu or one of his household slaves take hoe or spade in hand.

The women are as idle as the men; they spend their days squatting on the threshold of their doors smoking their pipe, or rather their cigar. Even little girls of eight to ten years smoke their cigars, the same size as our Londrès, fixed in a long bamboo tube. The quantity consumed by the fair sex, young and old, is considerable; I was given the average figure as being twenty cigars a day for officers' wives with some means; this amount does not entail a great expense, however,

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as tobacco is cheap in Szechwan. As, however, it is very strong, it has a grievous effect on these Manchu women, and gives them a stupefied air, which the less becomes them because some of them, in the upper class especially, have agreeable features.

The middle-class Tartar woman stays at home; when she goes for her rare walks in the streets she wears in her hair a camellia, or a peony, or some other flower in season. We never saw her sewing or doing any manual work as is the habit of her sex, not even embroidery, an employment reserved for Chinamen. The long robe worn by the Manchu lady would be elegant if it was properly cared for, but it is often dirty and torn, and rarely mended by the female slave, who models her conduct on that of her mistress. The wives and daughters of officers are dressed on special occasions in superb silk robes with fine embroidery, very becoming, but these never walk abroad; they remain in the home; they are seen at most sometimes on the threshold of their doors on a fête day or some family solemnity.

The recreation of the Manchu lady in the course of the day is the travelling pedlar – vendor of stuffs, of dainties, of provisions, or even of fuel. The lady is very greedy, and patronizes chiefly the vendor of tit-bits and dainties, and accordingly often in a few days she devours the little monthly pay of her soldier husband, and for the rest of the time the household is reduced to the rice ration. If a few sapèques remain, the housewife buys a slice of cabbage or even a slice of carrot; for a very large class of the Chinese and Manchu population is reduced to such poverty that a carrot or a

turnip can be sold in bits; while a cabbage will be divided into twenty or even thirty portions. Such facts seem incredible to the European, but whoever will walk about a Chinese town can see with his own eyes, at leisure, curious scenes of buying and selling; the quantity which changes hands will stagger him, while the possibility of making use of such minute quantities will puzzle him.

In winter it is the vendor of fuel whom the Tartars, both men and women, await most impatiently, particularly the fuel specialist who sells minute quantities of charcoal, used for the *no long tze* (chaufferettes). They seize eagerly their purchased handfuls, they light up quickly, and according to their pecuniary means warm their stomach and loins, or their stomach only.

I have striven to describe as exactly as possible the Tartars whom I saw daily during many years. There is no exaggeration in my account; it is the truth and nothing but the truth. A powerful race possessing gifts of organization and government, though less intelligent than the real Chinese, has come to an end. They conquered and ruled the great empire for three centuries; they knew how to take remarkable measures to maintain their omnipotence, but their reign seems to be over. Fed by the Chinese, and despised by them all the more in consequence, they have now lost the little prestige left by their warrior ancestors. Their race is perishing of idleness, and if it had not been for some able men among them who had become civilian mandarins and whom toil and struggle had stimulated, not allowing them to fall into the ranks of the 'do-nothing'

mandarins, its bankruptcy would have been complete long before now. Look at those renowned Tartars, conquerors of so many nations, before whom our fathers and all ancient Europe shuddered; look at them to-day when the weather is chilly; they amble about like the oxen they have become – they amble about carrying two chaufferettes for warmth. Yes, they disappear from the ranks of the strong. They are no longer the 'Banners,' but sheep without a shepherd. They are dying of a prolonged ease.

The contempt of every elementary precaution, the inconceivable neglect to provide means of drainage in a region where the rains are torrential in the summer have the result that parts of the Tartar city are completely flooded during the months of July, August and September. The picturesque boulevard which runs along the west wall and opens on the river, and the great open space of which I have spoken, I have often seen completely inundated and the road impassable in places for days together. Such rare canals as were dug out in former days have not been kept in repair, and are consequently choked up, and the waters stagnate undisturbed. I have even noticed places where two or three thrusts with the spade would have sufficed to clear the outlet in a small drain; but no one in the Camp, out of a population of ten thousand people, took this small trouble, or even thought of effecting this simple bit of clearance. Idleness is such that in certain streets all the rubbish of every kind is thrown out in front of the door, and ferments and decomposes there until it is cleared away by the rains. But what is worse is that

certain forms of filth, not utilized by the Tartar, who does no agricultural work, are placed by him just before his door, in the middle of cabbage leaves and turnip bought by him to be dried and transformed into *nan tsai* (salted vegetable). The presence of this ordure used to lead us, every time we passed, to make the reflection that it would have been preferable to have Chinamen as dwellers in the Camp, for then this ordure would have been carefully gathered up, and never left lying about.

To-day there are no more Tartar cities in China; their inhabitants were driven away in 1911 by the Chinese, whose vengeance was often cruel, as at Ou Chang, for example, where many women and children were massacred.

The town proper is laid out like the Camp, with great regularity; the roads are all parallel with the intersecting streets at right angles, save some rare exceptions where they bend a little. One never finds streets going transversely or bisected by a square surrounded by houses, as in our towns, allowing short cuts from one point to another. Not a single arrangement of this kind is to be found in Chengtufu. The inhabited area of the town is estimated at about 4,000 acres, while the surface occupied by vacant plots or cultivated ground and by parade grounds including that of the Tartar city is above 2,000 acres. The total population, including the suburbs, is 450,000. This aggregate is certainly far removed from some estimates, but their exaggeration at once strikes any one who has used his eyes, and has not come to a conclusion without a

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serious preliminary study of certain problems arising out of the conditions of social life in the empire.

Speaking generally, this very mixed population is formed of indigenous elements and Chinese strictly so called, with all the intermediate types resulting from a hybridization which has been going on for centuries. Taken as a whole, the people are rather inactive and rather lacking in industry; the European who has seen the great animation of Canton, or even of Tonquin, the commercial capital, is quite astonished at the calm in the streets, save in two or three principal thoroughfares.

Another subject of amazement for us at Chengtufu on arriving, was to note that every street was separated from its neighbour by very high barriers shut every evening like the gates of the great wall. The closing of these barriers is a measure of precaution against robbers, who always abound in Chinese towns, where there are usually no police worth calling so. Close to each barrier is a little cabin in which lodges a watchman who sleeps so soundly that the smashing in of the gate which it is his duty to watch would not wake him. I have always been struck, in fact, whenever I have been in a position to make observations, with the Chinaman's faculty of deep sleep, far sounder than that of the European; it is very difficult to wake him when this becomes necessary. He sleeps, besides, anywhere and at any moment; as soon as his work or other occupation no longer keeps him in a state of consciousness, he falls asleep, even on his feet. When he is carried about in a chair or in a boat, if he is alone he will sleep for

hours and hours. The only time when he is wide awake is when he is amusing himself; in that he is like a child.

The real guardian of the street is not he who sleeps at either end of it, but he whose business it is to go his round at the crossways and along the main thoroughfares, beating a drum or clanging a cymbal; he is the *ta ken tsiang*, the old night watchman of our French towns, no longer with us to-day, but carefully preserved in Chinese towns, where his rôle is of prime necessity. The night has five watches; the first, announced by gunshot, begins at sunset; the fifth ends at cockcrow. The poor men who ply this occupation receive a ridiculously small wage. I knew one of them, an excellent old fellow suffering from rheumatism, who came often to see me. When on his first visit I prescribed for him a rather costly diet, he cried, 'How could I get food like that, I a penniless wretch, who earn no more than one ligature and a half per month!' (about 4fr. 50). Yes, that was his monthly wage, and when his poor old limbs refused to carry him, he was obliged to give 20 or 30 sapèques a night to a substitute.

The Chinese street has to be guarded in this way because there does not exist what we should call any system of lighting; at its two extremities, but seldom in the middle, there are two poor little lamps containing a little colza oil. This lasts only for the first hours of the evening; for the rest of the night there is complete darkness.

All the streets are very narrow; they are generally from 6 to 12 feet broad, very often 9 feet. The broadest in Chengtufu is barely 15 feet. Some of them are very

irregularly paved, and there are deep holes where the stone has worn out. These holes are naturally dangerous to the pedestrian, the coolie, the horses and beasts of burden, but it does not occur to the municipal administrators, who moreover do not possess the powers of our municipal authorities, to do the necessary repairs, so that the paving stones which are worn out or broken are not replaced. These streets never have a side walk; there is a central track formed of a single row of paving stones placed very regularly end to end, and this is the best cared for part of the roadway. Those streets wholly unpaved consist only of beaten earth, so badly cambered that the surface is never convex in the middle with sloping sides; hence they store up the rains and are transformed into lakes of mud. In summer especially, when the rains are very abundant, these ways become impracticable for the European, and even sometimes for the native when, for instance, rain falls for two or three days in succession, leaving a foot of water standing on the clay soil, which is so soaked that it can absorb no more. Many a time in August or September we have not been able to cross some streets except on horseback, our animals up to the knees in water – with the added risk of breaking their legs in the numerous holes and throwing us into the muddy lake. These streets have often a deep side ditch as well, encroaching on the width of the road, which increases the danger to traffic. Sometimes the whole town is flooded; the north quarter, being on higher ground than the rest of the town, alone escapes. This is because, as in the Tartar Camp, there is no system of drainage, no



means for the water to escape. Theoretically, every street is supposed to have its little canal, but this, which is very inadequate in ordinary weather, is quite useless during the great rains. These outlets besides are rarely clear; all sorts of rubbish cause obstruction in a city where there is no sewerage system nor any municipal street cleaning.

All the houses in all the streets are limited to one storey; hence they make up for their want of height by the depth to which they stretch from their frontage.

In no part are there any sidewalks such as are found in our towns; neither are there, as on our main roads, boulevards planted with trees; there are no promenades, no public gardens, not even the least little square planted with shrubs and flowers. The Viceroy's palace (what a palace! I shall describe it later), the big public buildings, the yamens are never surrounded and brightened by courtyards or gardens of flowers and ornamental shrubs; if there were any such, they would not be open to the public. This great Chinese democracy, so called, is in reality most rigorous on the amount of liberty granted to the people; it never does anything for the good of the people, much less for its enjoyment. Trees are planted only round pagodas and certain private buildings such as clubs, for instance, or temples erected to the memory of great men. But in the last case the subscribers to the monument alone have the right to enjoy the gardens and the shade of the trees.

The streets of Chengtufu, like those of other Chinese towns, are in some degree specialized; the general rule is that two kinds of trades or shops should not occupy

the same street. There are silk streets, embroidery streets in large numbers, spinners, ribbon and trimming manufacturers, saddlers, furniture makers, jewellers, copper workers, food shops, etc. All these various bodies have their factories and shops in different streets and quarters. The system of our mediæval guilds is still in existence here, with more solid and lasting foundations; some of the guilds are most tyrannical, ordering the method and regulating the output without any care for the interests of the public, who rarely, however, show any resentment. The silk guild has a particularly exacting monopoly, and is upheld by the authorities, who hold in respect the power of its wealth.

There are also trade guilds such as tanners, leatherdressers or curriers. To the amazement of the European all these industries and others as unclean and as dangerous to public health are carried on in the open street, and all the waste products and refuse are thrown down there. In the Mussulman quarter, which is that of the butchers and tanners, this refuse is thrown into a ditch of stagnant water in the immediate neighbourhood. Think, then, of all the stench and causes of infection which are collected together in these Chinese towns where there is no system of drainage, nor of sewerage. And not a single town, in all the centuries, has made any effort to improve these pestilential conditions in the dwelling-place of its inhabitants. The people, moreover, are quite astonished when you call attention to the dangerous omission not only of hygiene but even of care for their comfort; they do not understand you. They and their ancestors have lived for

thousands of years in this way, and can there possibly exist in other towns among the Western barbarians any better conditions of life? How much less opposition the Chinaman would give to improvement, if he were not convinced that all is for the best in the greatest if not the only empire in the world!

Besides the commercial and industrial city, there remains for me to describe a certain quarter of ancient splendour, now sadly fallen away, which occupies nearly the centre of Chengtufu, – the Imperial Town. There remains of it only some ruins without beauty or character, and possessing no architectural features. The Imperial buildings have long disappeared, and not a vestige of them remains, but there are still the walls of the enceinte, even a triple wall. The outermost of these is of imposing dimensions; it constitutes a square, the sides of which measure more than 800 yards. Its height is about 25 feet, and its breadth 10 feet, and we have often taken our walk upon it. At the east and at the west it is pierced by two monumental portals, the vaults of which are not less in height than 16 feet, and in depth 28 to 30 feet. The third wall, of much more modest dimensions, encloses the Kong Iuen, or Examination Palace, a dreary pile built of ruined fragments of masonry braced together by hundreds, so confined, so unfit for habitation that every year numerous candidates die there from sunstroke.

A watercourse surrounds the Imperial Town; it is called the Yu-Hô, the Precious River. In former days it communicated with the river in the Tartar city, but at the present time all connection between the two

waters has ceased to exist, doubtless long ago. The 'Precious River,' moreover, no longer flows; its bed is nothing but a broad ditch into whose black and stinking waves tanners, leather-workers and knackers throw at will all the refuse of their unclean industries. If you ask the people living in the quarter why they do not re-establish communications between the two rivers, they do not even reply, thinking it an idle question. What would be the good of that? Besides, it is not their business!

I have now described the Tartar Camp, the commercial city and the Imperial Town, without having made any mention of the public buildings one might expect to see. The reason is that except for the pagodas there are no buildings to which such a designation could be applied. The Viceregal Palace is not only small in size but has no architectural character. It is a series of buildings, just like sheds, made of mud, brick and wood. The smooth surface of the walls, bare of any decorative design, is in bad repair, and seems to be crumbling away in places; the roofs alone have the elegant and artistic note which they always possess in China, with their lines of festoons, and their sharply pointed corners, coquettishly tilted. Inside the building one may search in vain for carved pillars in either wood or stone, or marble facings, or painted walls or ceilings. As for wainscoting, or rare and precious furniture, there is none. The viceregal residence is a collection of tumbledown old buildings, not only unfit to shelter a potentate commanding 40 millions of people, but insufficient to content the least exacting of Europeans,

so miserable is it, so denuded of every kind of comfort. And outside there is nothing but bare courtyards without a flower-bed or a bit of grass, still less a statue or an ornamental vase. The yamens of the Chief Justice or High Treasurer are no better equipped.

The University, or Ta-Hio-Tang, is installed in quite modern premises made of wood and clay. In the few buildings made of brick the walls are only one brick thick, making the rooms very hot in summer and very cold in winter.

But none of these buildings, as I have just said, possess anything of an architectural character; the temples alone deserve our attention. There are a great number in the town, but many of them are abandoned. The old trees which surround them are often their most beautiful ornament. The most remarkable of these temples is situated near Pé-men in the midst of a superb park; it is really a monastery, where more than 200 monks celebrate night and day the glory of Buddha.

I do not speak of the theatres, which do not exist as public buildings. Here they amount to little more than a stage in some private house, or are found in the streets like booths in a fair.

## THE CHINESE STREET

I HAVE completed the description of Chengtufu town, but in order to give a clearer idea of the life of its inhabitants, I must add some additional details and show what the streets are like, and what takes place in them. They differ very much from ours; the first thing that strikes one is the absence of wheeled vehicles of any kind. There are no tramways, no omnibuses, no common conveyances for carrying passengers, no lorries nor carts for carrying goods. There is indeed the wheelbarrow, but that cannot be used everywhere because of the state of the roads, and it moves very slowly; therefore the actual means of transport is man, whether he carries a palanquin or a bamboo with the loads slung at each end.

One does from time to time see coolies with huge baskets on their backs filled with blocks of salt or pewter or copper, but these are rarer than carriers with the bamboo across their shoulders.

Wheelbarrows are of two kinds, one used for carrying passengers, and the other for goods. That for passengers has a little bamboo seat in front in which the fare sits, his legs either hanging down or stretched out along the two side pieces which enclose the solid wooden wheels. In Chengtufu the wheelbarrow is small, and intended for one person. In other parts of China this vehicle can accommodate as many as eight passengers, in fours placed back to back on each side of a plank which divides the vehicle lengthways into

two. How often I have seen these poor coolies round about Shanghai, with straps round their necks, their half-naked bodies bathed in sweat; they have their legs wide apart the better to balance themselves; they drag their load with little jerky steps, their movement constantly checked and limited by the enormous oscillating weight hanging to the strap, which tends continually to force the muscles to the position necessary for equilibrium. This kind of wheelbarrow is used in Szechwan only for goods; it can be seen in the streets of Chengtufu, loaded with bundles of leaf tobacco, with rice or other cereals, sometimes with two great freestones, one on each side – with salt, coal, coke, or even two fat pigs. It was very distressing to me to meet these poor fellows pushing on painfully like resigned oxen, unable to shake off the yoke which cut their bruised flesh to the quick, pushing with enormous effort their heavy ill-balanced vehicles, over a track encumbered with every kind of obstacle, and the most irregular surface in the world.

What hindrances these brave wheelbarrow coolies have to contend with! How many times are they stopped with a jerk because their wheel has caught in the rut it has dug in the pavements or the ground for years! Sometimes a wheelbarrow upsets in the middle of the street, in the black sticky mud of the rainy season. Others following close are hustled by the chair porters and the bamboo carriers till there is a block of wheelbarrows much more difficult to disentangle than a block of traffic in our streets. If the sacks of rice have fallen, or the blocks of salt, or the large coal, or the blocks of

freestone, all very heavy for their weak muscles, what time is lost before these puny ill-fed men, slow in movement, can put things in order again. The scene sometimes becomes highly comical when on market day a herd of pigs rush about the narrow obstructed streets. I often had to travel in my chair over a very bad road, a terror to wheelbarrows, and there I have many a time seen couples of pigs carefully tied together, lying on their backs in the mud with their legs in the air, fighting and struggling, and uttering ferocious grunts. If a convoy of mules, cows or packhorses made their appearance at that moment the scene became indescribable. Much tribulation these poor wheelbarrow coolies pass through, and for a wage just sufficient to keep them from dying of hunger. I have doctored hundreds of these worthy fellows, whose necks and shoulders were atrociously blistered by the strap, which was not always a real strap but merely a piece of rope, — of more modest price. The sore, neglected in the beginning, dirty, infected by the palm-leaf bedding on which they stretch themselves in their miserable night's lodging, rapidly develops into an enormous abscess, spreading over half the back. They did not come to me until the last moment, after considerable suffering which they made light of, seeming indifferent to their physical pain. These poor beasts of burden with bleeding skins, who feel nothing, who are laden mercilessly, drag their heavy load until they drop, for their pittance is not paid until the end of the journey, and is earned only at that price. They are apparently incapable of revolt against their bitter lot, suffered by their predecessors for centuries.



These coolies came to me, but as soon as they were operated on and relieved, they hastened to return to the wheelbarrow proprietor to harness themselves afresh to their only means of gaining their bread. They have interested me so much that I have missed the sight of a mandarin's procession passing by, made up of heralds out at elbows, rigged out in strange red or green tinsels, wearing on their heads conical felt hats with narrow brims, recalling some of our mediæval head-dresses. Some of the heralds, bearing tablets on which were inscribed the titles of the mandarin, were bawling out the great virtues, the wisdom, the prudence of their master, his knowledge of the law and government, his kindness, his love for the poor and the humble. As his palanquin went forward, his satellites were crying every moment, 'Give place, give place for the great man who passes,' and the wheelbarrow coolies were rushing to one side, were pulling out of the way in haste their heavy and cumbrous vehicle until the cortège had passed amidst the shouts of the heralds and the shrill and ear-splitting notes of the kettledrums.

A gayer procession is the one which accompanies the flower-decked chair of the bride, carved and painted in vivid and startling colours. A whole suite of porters is engaged to carry the presents, which are spread out to view on gaily painted trays, furnished with high wooden handles through which the bamboo slides. The number of the trays naturally varies with the importance of the presents; these are for the most part very insignificant, consisting chiefly of meats, sweet-meats and other dainties.

There exists another kind of palanquin, not that of a bride and less beflowered, but none the less to be remarked for its refined elegance, its silk or satin lining, the spotless brilliant blue of its outer covering, and the very marked curve of its shafts, raising it high above the ground. It holds, you would think, what we call *une belle petite*, a yellow 'gay lady'; undeceive yourself, it is a person of the opposite sex, with clean-shaven face pale under its paint, and eyebrows cut to represent a butterfly's wing. He is dressed in a robe of fine silk, pale blue in colour; he is nonchalantly flirting a fan, and at the moment when you, a European, pass, he stops up his nose with a dirty handkerchief so that he may not smell the sickening odour of the white man. He will be annoyed at even passing your chair; we have the evil eye, it seems, and all sorts of calamities may emanate from us. This mignon has a strong belief in evil omen and fears it, as superstitious as a *fille de joie*. Under his painted mask of white lead, with his eyebrows a copy of feminine fashion of bedizenment, with the equivocal gleam of his gloomy eye, lifeless, so different from what lights up natural passion however venal, he is the repulsive image of the worst sexual folly. He has passed in his beautiful chair, leaving to us vague odours of questionable perfumes brought from Shanghai and before that from Hamburg, abominably adulterated, but well suited to such charms.

Coolies, mandarins, brides and mignons, these are naturally not the sole occupants of the street. Besides the business man who goes calmly to his office, never in a hurry as in our towns, there are the representatives

of diverse professions passing constantly along. I will cite a few. There is first the most curious of all, the perambulating restaurant keeper, who carries stove and fuel, kitchen utensils and victuals all on the two ends of a bamboo. He goes jogging along, stops at the first call, stirs up his fire, and soon serves smoking rice and savoury beans and cheese, morsels of meat and vegetables, or a cup of boiling tea. The meal served he starts off again at a trot, seeming to carry quite gaily his cumbrous burden.

Another peripatetic gentleman is the hairdresser. He also carries all his apparatus, and shaves heads or else beards, but particularly heads, according to Chinese custom, and without soap, a product he is not acquainted with. He has the business also of cleaning his customer's ears with little sticks and scrapers, which he pushes as far as the eardrum, conscientiously scraping the passage. These same sticks and scrapers, never wiped nor washed, pass from one customer's ears to another without either operator or client having the least suspicion that any harm may result. The eyes too have their turn to be cleaned; he passes under the eyelids certain little instruments; he then massages them. All these manipulations are done with the greatest dexterity and the greatest uncleanness in the world.

There is also a whole category of petty hawkers of materials and foodstuffs, who go from door to door with their wares. They must not be compared with our pedlars, who are more or less specialized; the Chinese hawkers will have every variety of commodity in the smallest imaginable quantity.

An interesting type in the street is the man who lets out pipes; he has two or three always stuffed with tobacco ready for the passing customer. Should a coolie stop his wheelbarrow or lay down his loads to give himself the treat of a smoke, the proprietor hands him the pipe, lights it, and, the tobacco consumed in a few rapid pulls, receives a *sapèque* in payment. This tiny fee corresponds to the insignificant quantity of tobacco consumed, about half a cigarette, so small is the bowl and so loosely filled. The pipe then passes to another mouth, passes to hundreds of mouths in the course of a day, and you notice that to neither customer nor proprietor will it ever occur to wipe off even with his sleeve the saliva left by the last customer. The letter-out of pipes, when the price of the tobacco is allowed for, will make a daily profit of 80 to 100 *sapèques*, about 9 or 10 sous. His livelihood is thus assured. Numerous in Chengtufu are the representatives of this strange profession, because they supply a real need; the multitude of coolies and artisans who will thus spend two or three *sapèques* on their smoke in the course of the day have not the means to buy at any given moment the smallest quantity of tobacco sold at a shop.

Among these breadwinners I must not leave out the collector of dogs' excrement, who goes from street to street, diligently gathering up the desired manure. This profession is as lucrative as that of the pipe proprietor.

There is again the grass-seller, who goes outside the walls to gather the plants and grasses which grow round the tombs in the common cemetery, where the very

poor are buried. Elsewhere the grass is the property of others, and is carefully reserved. Every day a man or woman brought for our horses a little load of all sorts of plants mixed with the real grass that the horses liked; we found there wormwood, pyrethrum, and fumitory added to make bulk and complete the load. Although my groom regularly refused these unwholesome plants the gleaner continued to bring them just the same, in larger or smaller quantities, hoping always that they would not be noticed. The best brought by these poor people came sometimes from our own garden; it was offered us at the usual price. We shut our eyes to this little act of plunder, but the groom discovered it, and his silence must have been bought at a price. For the load of grass the gleaner got generally 40 sapèques – about 4 sous – and it was his only means of livelihood. Though during the rains he could gather during the day enough for two loads, for about six months of the year he had great difficulty in completing one.

But the most striking object in the streets of Cheng-tufu, which inevitably attracts your attention here, as in every Chinese town, is the *kao houa tze*, the beggar. He forms a vast brotherhood, from which women are excluded, a brotherhood with its laws and its chiefs and its members, bound by the strictest discipline. Begging is an organized profession; it is part of the machinery of social life in the empire. This institution has usually at its head no common man but one of vigorous temper and the great energy required to make a success of his strange business, and to keep in the path of duty his depraved army, whose supervision is an extremely diffi-

cult task. For it may well happen that the results of their work, the provisions or clothing collected, may not be sent to the central store but be illicitly sold, or exchanged for sweetmeats or pipes of opium, to the loss of the association. As a fact, the total of alms collected each day is always of some value, and certainly never to be despised.

The beggar rarely asks in vain; people give to him regularly, they dare not do otherwise; they fear him, and above all fear his chief, all-powerful because he is rich and able to take action against them either by robbery or incendiarism, a risk which few can bring themselves to incur. The sight must be seen to be believed — these beggars in long strings or in gangs walking the streets; in our country, such a spectacle would rouse disgust and immediate protests from the whole population. Society would insist on the removal of such a scandal, and would demand that measures should be devised such as would insure the necessities of life to this class of cripples and incapables without such a useless and degrading exhibition. But in China the situation is acquiesced in, if not approved of by the people; it is a sort of mass levy, enforced by playing upon their fears and superstitions. In fact, among these beggars there naturally exist numerous degenerates, victims of hysteria, whose feats of second sight and hypnotism contribute powerfully to perpetuate a reign based on terror over a people which in spite of its scepticism is a prey to a thousand apprehensions, such as scientific knowledge alone would dissipate. These degraded creatures who wander the streets are rarely

infirm; hatred of work and absence of the sense of duty to society has led them into this most shameful of professions. They pass along, emaciated, like living skeletons or phantoms, their horrible nakedness disguised only by pimply itch or the stigmas of their vices; for they have every one of these, and the most repulsive of all. Oh, what a subject for a painter of the Dance of Death and diabolical passion! What huddling in their nocturnal refuges, those cesspools of pestilence, where so much degradation meets in hideous confusion! On mild days they pass through the streets hardly hiding their sex under a shred of filthy linen; in the winter they drag themselves shivering along, tightening round their shoulders the piece of cotton which this very night may be their shroud. Under European influence, they have more or less disappeared from the Treaty Ports, or at least are not seen in crowds.

May I be permitted, in conclusion, to tell of the agents of a lucrative industry, which can be seen in this form only in China? Every day towards the middle of the afternoon, one can see at the cross-roads, and at the street corners near the gates, a large number of wooden buckets filled with a mass of semi-liquid, semi-solid stuff, which I shall designate only by its Chinese name — *ta fen*.<sup>1</sup> At a signal from the chief of the gang, these particular coolies, whose sense of smell nothing offends, scatter in all directions, carrying to the farmers and market gardeners the true stimulant of all productions. The precious contents of these wooden buckets, not being always watertight, often leak out to

<sup>1</sup> Human ordure.

the great annoyance of the coolies, annoyance caused not as might be imagined by the pollution of the street but by the continuous diminution of the amount transported. These fellows do not even take the trouble to cover their vile-smelling utensils; they do not think of it; they do not realize the desirability. Never has a prefect been more abused and insulted than a certain mandarin of Tonkin, who had held office there some years, because at the instigation of Europeans he gave orders that the porters of *ta fen* must in future put covers on their buckets. There was a revolution, a general hue and cry; the corporation sent its members to the Yamen to protest, and these quickly passed from words to action, by smearing the walls of the prefect's residence with their special product.

I often noticed that when the porters stopped on their way to take refreshment at a restaurant or tea house, no one took any notice of the buckets they deposited at the door, and no one protested against their being left there. If by a clumsy movement some of the contents were splashed close to a customer, he did not even shift his position. In a country where the doctor's sign proclaims that he can heal and bring to life again, contagion is evidently not to be feared; moreover, our hygienic precepts and rules astound the people. China is also the country where the chemists every evening cause to be collected all remains of drugs and medicinal plants sold during the day, bray them all together in a mortar and make pills of them — pills which are bought by the poor because they are cheap.

In describing the passers-by I have spoken only of



the human beings, leaving animals unmentioned. As I have said that no wheeled vehicle except the wheelbarrow exists in the town, one will doubtless think that horses and other equine species are rarely to be seen. Some, however, there are, pack animals on their way to the mountain regions. Oxen are much the most numerous; they encamp in the streets as if they were in the open country. Pigs also wander about in some quarters, quarrelling with dogs over the filth in the street.

You perceive that this Chinese city is a kindly place where men and beasts live side by side. And it is a quiet city, this capital of Szechwan. In the streets there are no painful scenes, no bloody quarrels; scuffles and screams occasionally, but never accompanied by blows – fights, but never with violent consequences. To copy European usage, a viceroy three years ago created a police force of a hundred officers for the whole town, but their post is almost a sinecure; they often have to arrest thieves, it is true, but an assassin hardly ever. In the course of a whole year, I did not hear of a single crime of violence. Though there are apaches, ruffians, here as everywhere, they do not use knives, and the bourgeois who defends his property need have no fear of brutal treatment. Anyone who walks the streets at night in Chengtufu has nothing to fear; he does not run the risk of the Parisian who has lost his way in the suburbs. From the standpoint of general tranquillity, the Chinese town can set an example to European cities, where crimes of violence take place every day.

In his pleasures and his amusements, the Chinaman

of Chengtufu shows the same calm and serenity; even the children are rarely boisterous and noisy. In the streets on the big fête days, such as New Year's Day, for instance, you notice none of that silly or wild excitement so often seen in our towns and villages. We were astounded at the peacefulness of the old city. On the shop-windows and on the house-doors gaily coloured papers were pasted; streamers on which were written greetings and wishes for good fortune hung from the roofs; the people in the streets were smiling at each other, congratulating each other, but there was no shouting nor noisy demonstrations.

This people is only excited when the Government wants to increase the burdens which already weigh too heavily on them; they revolt then, not without reason, as their poverty is great. Their character, however, for non-resistance is such that the wildest schemes of agitators have some chance of success. In 1900 we witnessed the extraordinary occurrence which has since become historic. Twelve Boxers, men and women, entered Chengtufu – and took it; one may say so, since the whole population of 350,000, Viceroy and authorities included, shut themselves up in their houses, and dared not come out. These twelve fanatics remained masters of the town for several hours, indeed until the French Consul, M. Bons d'Anty, persuaded a little military mandarin that it was easy to get rid of the rascals. The soldiers having been assured that if they shot the bullets would not come back against them, and that no charm any longer guaranteed the Boxers from injury, speedily made an end of them, and the capital

was reconquered. The Viceroy, surrounded by his chief mandarins, and protected by two pieces of cannon fixed to the doors of the palace, thought that the city was invaded by thousands of dangerous and invulnerable fanatics; having no intelligence officers, he knew nothing of what was taking place. The intervention of our Consul enlightened him, and restored order.

## CHAPTER VI

### CHINESE DRESS

CHINESE dress, like the Chinese house, has not varied for thousands of years. Fashion is an unknown word; the most advanced young mandarin and the most elegant *grande dame* dress themselves like the contemporaries of Confucius, and their costume differs from that of the artisan only by the richness of the material. You must go into the international towns or to some rare cities of the interior to discover European influence.<sup>1</sup>

The form of clothing does not vary with the seasons; the poor content themselves with heaping the whole of their wardrobe on their backs in winter, and gradually removing the whole series of garments, which they have not taken off for months, as the temperature becomes milder. The well-to-do classes wear in winter furs or wadded clothes. This is because that precious material, wool, does not exist in China; or rather that no use is made of it. One can understand that the Chinaman, in the days when he was camping on the alluvial banks of the Hoang-ho or the Wai, would be unlikely to weave the wool of sheep, which must have been very scarce in that region, if indeed there were any there at all. But as soon as he set about driving back the barbarians who crowded him on all sides, and extended his territory towards the North, the South,

<sup>1</sup> At the time of the revolution of 1911, it was thought that European costume would come to be universally adopted, but since then reaction has been severe.

and the immense West, he must have come in contact with numbers of pastoral peoples, whose coarse clothing might have suggested to him, a skilful weaver, the idea of profiting by fine fleeces, light and warm in texture, and always easy to procure from domesticated animals. But nothing of the kind happened; he has limited himself to clothing of silk, cotton or ramie.

Wool would have been all the more serviceable to him, because silk is a luxury product never accessible to the masses, and it does not dispense with the need for other clothing, except in hot weather. Moreover, it is of fragile texture, not really practicable for the stronger sex, who however make more use of it than the women. It is indeed eminently suitable for the rich class of a people to whom all movement is abhorrent, who imprison themselves in an uncomfortable chair when obliged to go from place to place, and in short tend to become physically mummified. For some years, however, the young in the schools have, under American influence, been adopting physical culture.

Cotton is the textile most commonly used; dyed blue, it serves in Szechwan to clothe those of the population who cannot afford silk, that is to say, nine-tenths.

Ramie is much less common, but summer garments are made of it by the middle classes and some of the poor.

Chinese costume always takes the form of a long robe; the Chinaman thinks nothing so seemly and so elegant; he has a profound contempt for our waistcoats and short jackets. As fashion does not exist for him, he cannot conceive why our tailor has pared here and cut out there to build up an *ensemble* that seems

to him the last word in eccentricity. The basques of our tail-coats are an insoluble problem to him; he is led to believe quite sincerely that it is in a spirit of economy that we have cut away stuff where normally it ought to be. But what is most grotesque in his eyes is the white linen dinner jacket worn by elegant Europeans of Hong-Kong, Shanghai, and Tien-Tsin in the summer evenings. This garment, with the back cut in the shape of a heart and the front barely reaching the loins, is the climax of folly and stinginess. We become respectable and civilized people only in winter, when we put on our cloaks and overcoats. You would be greatly admired in a town of the interior if you walked about the streets in a very full and conspicuously coloured dressing-gown in large checks; your smartest lounge suit or morning coat would on the contrary be noticed only with supreme disdain.

When I went up the Yang-Tse, I used to run about the hills in the simplest linen or cloth suit that I possessed, and even in the evening I did not encumber myself with an overcoat. But the day before we arrived at Tonquin, the weather having grown much colder, I put on a kind of Inverness cloak, not at all elegant according to our ideas. The crew, nevertheless, were full of admiration for this mantle, and got the interpreter to ask me why I had not put on such a handsome garment at the beginning of the journey.

The conceited Chinaman imagines that we do not know silk, and that barbarians could not make such a material. When he is told that the precious stuff is as common in France as in China, but that men leave it

for women to wear, he cannot understand; he cannot believe that in any country silk would be appropriated almost exclusively by the sex he considers inferior.

Besides the robe, the Chinaman wears a kind of breeches, or rather pants, made of silk or cotton according to his means. These breeches, very broad at their bottoms, are fastened to the ankles by laces; he thinks our trousers very unpractical, falling as they do loosely over the shoes, letting in cold and dust. But though our trousers are not admired, our socks on the contrary, especially when of startling colour, are the object of serious envy; they are indeed very superior to theirs, which are not woven but generally cut out of a piece of white cotton. Moreover, they are a luxury not accessible to the masses.

As regards underlinen, the Chinaman is very badly supplied; the shirt is not in the Celestial Empire the universal garment possessed by the poorest in France, the absence of which means the extreme of destitution. In our country the meanest tramp possesses as many shirts as a high Chinese mandarin, and he changes them more frequently. The Chinaman does not feel the same need for clean linen as does the European. He will cheerfully wear the same shirt for a month, or even two, and its dirt-begrimed appearance does not move him to change it. The sensation of physical and moral repugnance from uncleanness in underlinen is not felt by him in any degree. The rare shirts of the rich are not washed until summer. In all the regions of China which have a winter, and that is nearly everywhere, the people do not undress at all after the cold weather has set in; at Chengtufu winter lasts six

months. The reason is that the inhabitant of the most comfortable house has no means of heating his rooms; he possesses neither stove nor fireplace. He is afraid of getting cold, and so keeps on his shirt and other garments when he goes to bed; only the outer robe is taken off before he stretches himself on a sheetless bed. Sheets are another unknown luxury in the great empire; the Emperor himself possessed only a single pair. We Europeans are sybarites indeed, and our affectation of uncalled-for cleanliness makes the Chinaman shrug his shoulders. And our extravagant laundry work – those collars and cuffs of immaculate whiteness which we throw away at the end of two or three days as soon as there seems to be a shade over their purity – are we not ridiculous and foolishly spendthrift? The shirt itself is changed almost as often. Such habits are really incomprehensible to him.

Another subject of wonder is that in winter the European wears, under his cloak or overcoat, clean and well-kept clothes. Why? The Chinaman's outer garment alone is presentable; the others are always dirty. In spite of this he never considers himself as wanting in decency or cleanliness, as long as the robe which every one can see is of beautiful stuff, unspotted and well cared for. Evil-smelling rags under a silk robe, that is too often China – an admirable façade masking horrible squalor, the result of inertia and pride.

I said just now that the mandarin did possess a few shirts – the mandarin and the rich merchant – but the rest of the population have none. The poorest of our peasants and labourers have at least two complete



suits of clothes; it is not so in China. Most of the population carry on their backs all they possess. They have no change of clothing; they do not replace a garment until it falls to pieces. It is thus impossible to nurse and cure persons who suffer from the itch, whose number is legion. Where is a clean garment to be had to replace what ought to be disinfected? The problem is insoluble, unless the patient agrees to come into hospital, which happens rarely. The itch is so familiar to him that he ends by enduring it with perfect serenity.

One peculiarity of Chinese clothing which strikes the European is the absence of pockets; he has not a single one. The things we usually put in our pockets are carried in the girdle by coolies and workmen; the other classes put them in little bags which hang on to their robes. Their sleeves folded back at the wrist or the low boots which they wear when elegantly dressed serve to hold many objects, particularly letters and papers. Letters are so insecure that nothing is more frequent than their loss on the road; any European who has entrusted letters to coolies or soldiers has much to say on that subject.

I have just alluded to the coat-sleeves turned back to form pockets; the unreasonable length of these sleeves makes one wonder, one cannot conceive of the reason of such a fashion, or rather such an anomaly. Every class of society wears long sleeves, even the peasants and workmen, and God knows the time they lose out of a day's work in continually rolling them back. There is nothing elegant in these huge sleeves, *ta sieou tze* — they are so enormous that nothing is seen

of the arm. It is lost in a great cylinder of stuff, which hangs down to the feet. The wearer has to throw up his arm and shake it vigorously before he can get the lower part of his sleeve to slide back, and uncover the hand. A European would never submit to such annoyance, such slavery. Queer people who by preference or by fashion can thus chain their arms, as if the very idea of being ready for action and effort were repugnant to them! Long sleeves, you are the sleeves of decadents!

As to certain accessories of the toilette such as ties, gloves and handkerchiefs, the Chinaman either does not know them, or prefers not to use them, with the exception of the handkerchief, which, however, he employs in a different manner from ourselves. He uses it to tie up anything he wants to take special care of — such as a watch, for instance. It is a very dirty piece of cotton, but nevertheless he will never consent to sully it with his nasal mucus. That mucus goes to the ground, always, the high mandarin's as well as the coolie's, manipulated, as one may guess, with the thumb.

Women's costume is somewhat different from that of men. Their robe is much shorter, rather like a tunic reaching to the knees, for it would not be seemly for the weaker sex to have the same privileges of elegance as the stronger; the superiority of the one over the other must be shown even in the dress. The mandarin's wife, however, is authorized to wear a pleated skirt, in full ceremonial dress.

The tunic is of silk or cotton according to the means of the wearer; the costume is completed by trousers of silk or cotton usually embroidered, save

in the lower classes; they are generally very wide. The women of the poor who cannot afford enough stuff to make them sufficiently ample wear them fitting closely, or replace them with a kind of puttee wound round the leg and carried high up under the tunic. Nothing is so ungainly than the shape of these poor Chinese women, whose spindle shanks are thus exposed in their entirety, like the legs of caricatures where the head and bust are of exaggerated size. The mutilation of their feet forces them to walk in a peculiar way, like a man who has lost both legs propelling himself along by two sticks. It follows that the muscles at the back of the leg, and particularly the muscles of the calf, become completely atrophied. There is even atrophy of the whole foot, as a result of the want of regular exercise; its atrocious deformity prevents real walking for any length of time, as the foot has ceased to be a sufficiently sustaining base.

The Manchu lady is differently dressed from the Chinese; she wears the long robe, like the man. Was it a caprice of the conqueror to decide that his wife should wear the costume of the male of the vanquished people? I do not know, but it has always been the privilege of the Manchu woman to wear the long robe.

As for articles of toilet, the Chinaman has no ordinary towels such as we use, nor our useful Turkish towels; he admires them much, but they are an article of luxury within reach of the rich alone. Our towels are so much sought after that the boy from Shanghai or even the coolie will save up money to buy one. Very small cheap ones are specially manufactured for

such customers. At the present time, the Chinaman uses for his toilet a cotton rag, a clout you might call it, never clean, and which lasts an indefinite time without being washed.

There remains the question of footgear; here again the Chinaman's work is inferior to that of the European. His shoes and boots have neither the finish nor the elegance nor the solidity of ours. At Chengtufu the well-to-do walk about in felt or stuff shoes, so unpractical that the least rain completely soaks the foot, especially in roads where water lies in stagnant pools and mud is always abundant. These shoes are shaped like ordinary slippers and are never high in the leg, and are without laces or buttons. Leather is employed only for heavy boots for soldiers, grooms, hawkers, and such people who cannot afford a chair. The luxury boot is of black satin, with very thick felt soles; it is of course not intended for walking; its wearers never leave the house except in a palanquin.

Lately they have begun to manufacture laced boots after the European model, but very clumsy. The actual footgear used by those whose profession obliges them to walk along the abominable Chinese roads is the *tsao hai*, or straw sandal, which is never slippery, and which protects the sole of the foot. To conclude, though a Chinaman's footwear is bad and unhygienic, it costs him almost as much as that of a European, so much better shod, for if he cannot afford a chair and must go on foot, his shoes or sandals, unfit for much wear, have to be frequently replaced.

There is little to say about the head-dress; it con-

sists in winter and indeed for the greater part of the year of a small silk skull-cap; when larger at the top, this becomes also the official hat of the mandarin. It is hot and not very practical, but it is better than our horrible bowlers or our ridiculous top-hats. The official straw hat is shaped like a very broad cone; it is very light.<sup>1</sup> The summer head-dress of the coolie or peasant in Szechwan is the *li teou*, an enormous hat of plaited bamboo, or more commonly still the straw hat with broad side pieces, so broad that they have to be fixed under the chin with string. There is indeed one variety which the countryman puts on only when he goes to town; it is so extraordinarily large that he has to hold the brim with both hands. This variety is often very finely plaited. Perhaps it is not known that every year tons of ribbon straw plaited here are sent to France to make our summer hats. In Szechwan and elsewhere there are also real felt hats, but these are worn only by Chinese Mussulmans.

In short, though China is very proud of her silks, she forgets that the mass of her inhabitants are reduced to wearing nothing better than common calico; she is ignorant that for practical purposes nothing can take the place of wool, which would be useful throughout the empire not only for outer garments but for underwear. The Chinaman, however, is discovering this, and if his purse were better filled our flannel and woven woollen goods would be at once adopted. I have shown, too, how badly his wardrobe is furnished with the linen which we consider indispensable; no

<sup>1</sup> These various official hats have to-day disappeared almost everywhere.

sheets, two or three towels and as many shirts, and this meagre outfit applies only to a small part of the population. No stockings, no socks except a piece of cotton shaped to the foot, worn in winter and summer, and that again even a luxury for the well-to-do; no practical shoes in good supple leather, for his leather is stiff, owing to the defects of his tanning processes. Such is the position of the Chinaman with regard to clothing and its accessories. But I must add that European footwear and European straws and felts are in great demand among the elegant.

I saw once in a great town on the opening day of the examinations a whole procession of high mandarins, who were to be shut up for a fortnight; behind each palanquin was fixed a minute trunk, smaller than a valise, on which was fastened the Number 2 official hat, Number 1 being on their heads; and above this hat was spread out the towel; that was all. How far we are in Europe from this simple life of patriarchal days!

I was talking about all these things one day with a Parisian of the class called cultured; I enumerated to him all the things wanting to the well-to-do Chinese. He at once loudly affirmed the great inferiority of the yellow race to the white, and then abruptly asked me, 'At any rate, they have motor-cars?' On my reply in the negative, he exclaimed, 'But then they are nothing but savages!' Wise philosophers, and refined Greek *literati*, proud patricians of ancient Rome, you who never possessed the amazing wardrobe or motor-car of the civilized man of present-day Europe, you cannot indeed have been anything but barbarians, savages!

CHAPTER VII  
CHINESE FOOD

**I**N Europe it is a common habit to ridicule the Chinaman's peculiar taste in food. Mention is made of stags' sinews, swallows' nests, sharks' fins, the intestines of fish, holothuries, black gelatinous puddings at which we shudder, dogs' flesh, rats' flesh, and other culinary oddities; but none of these dishes have their place in his everyday diet; they are special dishes, rarely served save at great feasts, except the dog and rat, which may be called the delicacy of the poor. Moreover, what is the swallow's nest but a collection of seaweeds out of which, or something like it, our confectioners regularly make the fruit jellies which we enjoy? And the shark's fins and the fish's intestines? Do we not frequently eat tripe, which if you like is cooked *à la mode de Caen*, but is none the less the entrails of an animal? As for the shark fins, nearly every day we crunch up the cartilage of fish, and the gristle of a pig's ear.

I grant you that the stag sinews are a peculiar dish, but what of it? The Chinaman eats it because he attributes to it virtues that will prolong a certain phase in his existence — that of procreation; therefore he keeps to it. In a word, the Chinaman lives like us on meat and vegetables, with naturally certain preferences which I will point out by the way.

First of all, he divides his food into two categories, which do not correspond exactly to our division of foods into three or four forms of nutriment, any more than

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to the classification made by our *cordons bleus*; these are fat or lean, but vegetables like garlic, onions and leeks are included in the fat category. *Tche houen* is to eat fat foods – meat, fish, eggs, and the vegetables I have mentioned. These foods constitute the *houen tsai*; they are further subdivided into two other classes – *ta houen*, or pork, and *siao houen*, which includes any meat other than pork, fish, eggs, and the vegetables already cited.

Pork is the food preferred above all others by the Chinaman. When he says '*tche jou*,' 'I am eating meat,' he always means pork – the unique, the only meat for him. Beef, mutton, goat's flesh or game leave him cold; he eats them only because they are cheaper, when he cannot afford pork. He has such a passion for pork, the fat parts particularly, that nothing on earth seems more delicious to him. When the poor wretched starveling coolies are discussing among themselves the number and quality of the material enjoyments of the *Houang ti*, the Son of Heaven, they never fail to cite the extraordinary happiness of being always able to buy every day for his dinner 100,000 lb. of pork fat. Their eyes light up at the thought of such a possibility, and their mouths fall open as if to catch some drippings of this delicious fat, melted down, in Chinese fashion, to be swallowed greedily.

Whenever I went into the streets I would meet or see at the eating-house doors men whose faces indicated a very marked state of congestion – red faces, bloodshot eyes, and the veins standing out from the temples. This congestion was the result of overeating,



a very frequent phenomenon in China, where excess whenever it is possible is the rule. The phrase '*tchang lien tche te fei hong*' – 'He ate until he was red in the face,' is often heard in the streets of Chengtufu. After wedding feasts and other festivities, death from indigestion is by no means uncommon. The pittance of the Chinaman is so often reduced to the extreme minimum necessary to keep him alive that whenever he has a chance, and especially when his victuals will cost him nothing, he eats voraciously. What he devours chiefly is pork fat – one, two, or sometimes three great bowls full, finishing the meal with a little rice to clear off the sticky coating covering his lips and teeth. This mass of fat, incomparably indigestible, at once causes intense congestion of the viscera, which is shown in the face by the signs which I have just described; the man seems as if he were on the point of bursting. Nowhere, so much as in China, have I observed such plainly marked symptoms of overeating.

Nothing is more painful to the Chinaman than abstention from fat; nothing makes a patient more miserable than the prescription of *ki ieou* (no fat): he is always much impressed, puts on a discomfited air, and does not fail to consider himself as seriously ill. Nothing gives him so much joy as the raising of the veto, and if he has enough cash that day he will head straight for an attack of indigestion.

Though, in China, pork fat and various vegetable oils, such as castor oil, arachis oil, sesame oil, are used in the preparation of food, the same cannot be said of that animal fat so much appreciated by us, and

which we call 'butter.' It is not known; there has been no attempt to make it. The barbarous tribes of West Szechwan and also the Thibetans are the only peoples who make great use of it. Milk also is not appreciated; the Chinaman has a great disdain for it, and never drinks it. An old man only will consent to take some when much enfeebled and when other remedies have failed, but even then the only milk he will take is human milk; they get him a wet-nurse.

It is almost the same with eggs as with milk; they are not an article of consumption frequently used, and they are only eaten rotten – black in appearance, and smelling horribly. In the Szechwan Alps, the native, unlike the Chinaman, feeds freely on new-laid eggs; during a journey that we made in that country we found eggs everywhere on the route set out for sale in the smallest eating-houses.

I propose to try now to describe as exactly as possible the customary menu of a grand dinner at Cheng-tufu. First of all, the food is not dished up in our fashion. Roast meats either by themselves or surrounded with vegetables are characteristic of our culinary art; this is not the case in China; no flesh is roasted except sucking-pig, and very excellent it is.<sup>1</sup> The meat is always served cut up into very small bits, and carefully mixed together; on the same dish you find slices of duck, ham, chicken, roast pork, etc. Each guest fishes at will in the heap with his chopsticks, chooses, and carries to his mouth. Ham, especially if it comes from Yunnan, is very good;

<sup>1</sup> Ducks also are fairly often roasted.

duck and chicken or rather capon are always tasty and basted with great care. Besides these tiny morsels, they keep bringing to you plates of hot bouillon in which are floating thin slices of the same meats or mushrooms or sugared seaweeds. The Chinese are very fond of these soups; they swallow large quantities, not with their chopsticks as some one in France once asked me, but drinking from the plate.

There are always vegetables – cabbage, peas, beans, spinach, bamboo shoots or pea tendrils, according to the season; they are cooked in water, and not an atom of dripping or oil enters into the cooking. It is very rarely that they are sufficiently cooked, the custom being to take them off the fire as soon as they are beginning to get soft; the European feels as if he is eating raw vegetables. To help them down, it is customary to add to them an oil sauce, *tsiang icou*, often perfumed, a sore trial for a queasy stomach. Fish is eaten with the same preparation, or another salt variety. An excellent dish, quite inoffensive to Europeans, is made of prawns mixed with rice cooked in fat; simply seasoned, it has an agreeable taste. Its only fault is often an excess of grease, of which the Chinaman is so greedy. The host, moreover, would feel that he was doing his guests an injury if any dishes requiring the addition of fat were not prepared with as much fat as could possibly be added.

A choice dessert dish is a kind of almond milk very savoury and digestible; the best fruit is a delicious little cherry floating in the pure juice of the sugar-cane.

During the whole of the repast, the Chinaman is

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nibbling apricot almonds or melon seeds; he cannot do without them. It might be thought that they stimulate his appetite.

One great act of courtesy which your host or your neighbour does not fail to pay to you is to fish in the dish of mixed bits of meat and to pass you his catch. Before seizing the slice destined for you he has cleaned his chopsticks with a rapid lick of the tongue, and after this homage to hygiene and cleanliness he effects his capture, which you are bound to accept under pain of gross discourtesy. You can thus receive from both sides at once these marks of delicate attention, particularly when he has taken note of the kind of meat you seem to prefer.

But what is the ordinary daily fare of the Chinaman? The rich eat every day a little pork, chicken or duck, but mainly soups and vegetables. With these dishes, instead of the bread which we eat in the course of a meal, they take *kan fan* (dry rice, that is rice stewed in a marmite) as distinguished from *hsi fan* (boiled rice, which is the food of the poor and the sick). The generality of the comfortable classes consume very little meat; their principal food is rice and vegetables, with a little dish of pork. Macaroni and vermicelli are frequently eaten.

There is a large consumption of fish.

The poorer classes feed on rice when they can; if they are obliged to go without it, they then eat cakes made of wheat, maize or millet, and macaroni and vermicelli, but chiefly vegetables, and plenty of vegetables, because of their cheapness; meat is usually

out of their reach. But happily for the craftsmen, that most interesting class of workers to whom China owes what still remains of physical and moral health, there exists for their sustenance the famous bean cheese, called *teou fou*, which makes a very nutritious food, and is largely consumed even by the rich. It is the Chinaman's real nitrogenous food, that which gives him the necessary strength to accomplish the arduous toil—the labour of a beast of burden—which his present economic organization imposes on him. Many people who have travelled through the Far East, and even stayed there, express profound admiration for the Chinese or Japanese coolie, who they say performs feats of physical endurance without eating any meat, and having nothing to sustain him but bowls of rice and slices of salted vegetable. I will not discuss here the question of endurance in the yellow race—an endurance, moreover, that has been much exaggerated—but I must point out what is forgotten, that the coolie and the artisan, in these countries, finds in bean cheese a nutritive product *par excellence*, the necessary proteid for the restoration of his tissues.

Prominent among vegetables of constant consumption in Szechwan are gourds, pumpkins and cucumbers; these are a very cheap food, the food of the masses.

In China, as indeed in some countries of Europe, vegetables are not eaten in the fresh state only, but are preserved in brine, when they are called *han tsai*. Under this head are included numerous varieties of

vegetables, whose leaves are exposed to the air on hurdles or on bamboos, to attain complete desiccation. At the end of autumn, in the neighbourhood of all the towns and villages, you will see enormous spaces where these vegetables are suspended. The large-leaved cabbage without a heart is the principal constituent of *han tsai*. As soon as they are dry, the leaves are put into a brine tub, and thus preserved for future consumption. *Han tsai* is an important article of commerce, and goes wherever market-gardening is little developed.

When the Chinaman sits down to table, he is not surrounded with the paraphernalia which is customary with us; he has his chopsticks and sometimes a little earthenware spoon with a short handle, but that is all. No fork, never a knife; his meat is cut up beforehand, as I said, into very small pieces, and I have never seen him divide a fruit – apple or pear, for instance – with a cutting instrument. Like the meat, these fruits are served cut up beforehand into thin slices. He does not eat cheese made of milk, and here again a knife would be useless to him.

As regards silver plate, or even simpler articles, sufficiently costly nevertheless, they never appear on the table of the high mandarin, still less on the tables of other classes of society. The bowls, tureens or other receptacles for the table used by the Chinese are most simple, and generally of earthenware or common porcelain; the dinner services we use are not manufactured by him. He takes his tea in a plain bowl in which the leaf is infused under any odd cover, but our

beautiful teapots in silver and silver-gilt belong to Europeans alone.

Nor for his cooking has he the improved apparatus which is at our disposal: his battery of marmites, casseroles, gridirons, Dutch ovens, etc., is of the most rudimentary kind, and does not include a quarter of the utensils which we employ. The kitchen ranges and improved ovens which we possess have not yet been invented by him, nor has he found out how to produce and regulate the gas which serves us for both lighting and heating. His utensils are confined to some bowls and little plates, rather like our saucers. He has no glass-ware, this being known to him only by importation from Europe. He works in crystal, and cuts snuff-boxes and lenses for his spectacles out of it, but he does not make from it any of the delicate little objects we see on our tables.

As for linen, tablecloths and napkins, which the majority of the white race use, and which, especially the napkin, they regard as indispensable, the Chinaman has never availed himself of them, and does not see the necessity. At the end of the meal he passes over his mouth and then over his face a cotton rag dipped in warm water, and this done, has observed the rules of meticulous cleanliness.

When one has lived some time in China, one is astounded to find how artificial are certain essentials of our present-day civilization; nevertheless, it is settled that this is progress, and that our well-being is sensibly increased thereby; so much indeed does it increase that a day will arrive when we shall have

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become like the *rois fainéants* of history. We shall even come to dread the effort which has brought about these new conditions of existence; and, failing then in the necessary energy to maintain them intact, we shall lie down in decadence, our vitality all used up, crying in our turn for 'bread and games' – not the circus, however; that would be too brutal for our sickly sentimentality, far removed from the true sentiment of humanitarianism; no, but the theatre – of dancing-dolls.



CHAPTER VIII  
ARTS AND INDUSTRIES

FOOD

THERE is little to say on the provision industry; the Chinaman has made the most of the resources at his disposal. What he is ignorant of is the means of preserving food in any other way than by salting it or by drying it in the open air. Our modern methods of preservation in a vacuum after destroying the germs of fermentation are unknown to him. Nor has he learnt what a precious nutritive reserve he has in milk, because of the butter and cheese it yields.

CLOTHING INDUSTRY

The Chinaman has never made any great inventive effort to adorn his own person, or the persons of his wife and daughters. For centuries, silk and cotton stuffs, methods of weaving, and colours, have remained the same. The mode of weaving, moreover, is most primitive, and produces only very imperfect material, full of defects – the woof irregular, being sometimes loose, sometimes tight. The process of spinning is besides very defective, on account of the inadequate appliances and the mediocre skill of the craftsman. Silk or cotton thread of a given length varies extremely in calibre, sometimes coarse, sometimes fine, strewn with knots and joinings. The finest robes of mandarins or great ladies, even those worn by the *houang-ti* (Emperor), are very faulty masterpieces, which would

be refused by our great costumiers. What perfection Lyons obtains in weaving, and what marvellous tissues are produced there, compared to similar silk materials manufactured in China! In the same way, our cotton materials, which, with their varied colours, their original and ever-changing designs, give value and elegant charm to the commonest of stuffs – our cottons, I say, leave far behind a similar product in Chinese industry. This product is indeed so strikingly inferior that it can no longer stand against the competition of imported cotton cloths coming from Europe or America, even in the estimation of the Chinese purchaser. And yet the cotton plant can be cultivated without great expense in most of the provinces of China; in the hands of an industrious and energetic people, the cotton manufactured might have been so good and so cheap that a piece of foreign stuff could never have succeeded in reaching the interior. At the present day, the exact contrary is the case; the importation is so considerable that the culture of the cotton plant is abandoned more and more, and will shortly disappear, even in a region so far removed from the coast as Szechwan. The successful struggle would only have been possible for the Chinaman if he had abandoned his primitive looms, and transformed his antiquated processes of dyeing and printing – in a word, if he had borrowed our own methods.

I have just alluded to the dyeing processes employed in the empire; like spinning and weaving, they remain very far from perfection. It is very rarely that two vats prepared to produce the same shade have the

same degree of concentration; more than that, the operation of steeping is never rigorously maintained for the same length of time for similar stuffs; finally, the mass of tissue plunged in the vat is too often irregularly distributed and compressed so that the degree of impregnation varies in places, and consequently the depth of colour.

Silk, cotton and *ma pou* (ramie or grass cloth) are the only textiles used by the Chinaman, and these in the way I have described. The fine tissues of cambric which Europe produces have never been manufactured by him; moreover, the small amount of linen which he wears is always coarse, unless he lives on the coast and purchases the delicate stuffs either imported or manufactured on the spot in European mills. In the same way, the lace, so astonishing in variety and beauty, which Europe has fabricated for so many centuries, is unknown to the Chinaman; no wife or daughter of his has ever conceived the idea of inventing this work, in which an infinity of combinations has created marvels of intricacy and beauty. They make up for the loss by their embroidery, which is everywhere made, in public workshops as well as in the interior of *yamens* and country houses. Europeans agree in praising the various styles in use; the tints are pleasing to the eye, and the combinations of colours form a general harmony. At Chengtufu there are to be found embroideries for *portières* and curtains of the most delicate work, masterpieces of skill and patience.

I have spoken of the different materials used by the

Chinese. I have now a word to say on the way these stuffs are made up; it is simplicity itself. The Chinese tailor has never to worry himself over a new cut, or to combine his stuff with a view to a 'creation' of elegance and good taste; such an effort is never required of him. His ancestors cut out a pattern thousands of years ago; if it had been made of imperishable paper, which no gnawing insect could invade, it might still at the present day serve for the descendants of those who, at that far-away epoch, ordered robes for themselves. And nothing could be more primitive than this simple pattern; – the flowing vesture worn by the ancestors of all the human races of whom history has bequeathed the sayings and doings; the linen robe of the Hebrew, the Roman toga, the Greek peplum, – with variations, it may be conceded, – but all conceived according to the same scheme; in short, the most simple form which immediately recommended itself to the earliest ages as a complete cover for nakedness. Our suits, made of waistcoats, jackets or frock-coats, – ugly enough certainly, – our cloaks, and even more the toilettes of our wives and daughters, are complicated achievements made with ingenuity and dexterity, compared to the easy arrangement of a Chinese costume, whether it be designed for one sex or the other.

As to lingerie, there is no comparison to establish, since this so-important accessory to dress practically does not exist in China. All those frail and delicate tissues of refined luxury, or those other garments for commoner use, more simple and practical, – all the combinations decreed by elegance to deck and heighten

visible and invisible charms, — in short, all those little marvels which science, art and good taste have united to create, — are still removed from the imagination of the Chinaman. And be sure that if his resources allowed him such a debauch of luxury, his wife would be the last to enjoy those delicate articles of the toilette; he would first of all attire himself in them.

In the large shops of our towns, a very important department is entitled 'gloves, feathers and hats.' There too is elegance and art and luxury and God knows how many combinations and inventions and refinements to gratify our idols with an ever-changing plumage. In China it is quite otherwise: the glove is still unknown, except in the ports; the feather is never used, not even to stuff a common mattress or pillow as in our rural districts; the only exception is the peacock's feather which adorns the official hat of the mandarin. Moreover, the article 'Feather' is entered in the export columns of the Chinese Customs to the figure of 500 to 600 tons; this product is bought by Europe and the United States.

There remains the hat: I have described the hat worn by men, but what is the fashion of feminine headgear? The Chinese woman wears neither hat nor cap, such as we see in our country; the countrywoman, however, can protect her head from the sun by a large straw hat, but the most usual custom in all classes is to wear what are called *cheou che* or head ornaments. The expression so little implies the idea of a head-dress that it is used in a much more general sense to describe all sorts of ornaments such as hairpins, rings

and bracelets. For everyday use the women of the people or the middle classes wear on their heads when they go out a bandeau of silk or cotton stuff, ornamented with artificial flowers, trinkets or tinsel. This bandeau is put on like a crown with the convex point in front. The women of the higher classes adorn their hair with pins, flowers, and a thousand other precious things; all these adornments are for indoors, as outdoor life with its visits to Paquin or the Galeries Lafayette of the town, the holidays at the seaside or in the mountains, the race weeks and other dissipations, all the joys and distractions of the open air, are cruelly forbidden to the poor Chinese lady, except for some emancipated women (or rather women torn up by the roots), who can be found in international cities like Shanghai.

## FURNITURE

Every one knows the artistic cabinets, tables and little pieces of furniture in the grand style made by the Chinese, but these are rareties or curiosities, to be found only in the houses of the mandarin or rich merchant. Furniture in Europe includes a number of articles whose good taste and artistic quality make them quite equal to anything in Chinese art, and even often surpass it. The upholsterer, moreover, at Szechwan as well as the rest of the Empire, has very little to do: his great work consists in upholstering the palanquins *de luxe*.

Apart from embroidered stuffs, there is nothing to beautify the homes of the most fortunate classes.

Patterned carpets and hangings and the whole category of curtains, where so much variety and charming fancy are mingled, are never seen either in town or country houses. The art of tapestry with its admirable creations is also unknown here. Inside the public buildings, temples and private mansions, you have none of these mural paintings to contemplate, these immortal masterpieces born of the artistic genius of another race. The only paintings you will notice are rude productions of primitive talent, recalling our shop signs, such as our house painters would daub: they invariably represent the same dragon or the same *men chen* (gods of the gate), all apparently traced from the same model.

To supply the place of mural paintings, there are no pictures to adorn the galleries of public or private buildings. In Szechwan, and in nearly all China, the subjects chosen by the artist are painted on long strips of silk, cotton or paper, which only distantly recall our canvases. The most precious of these paintings, those which have a real artistic quality, are never hung on the walls; their fortunate possessor rolls them up carefully, and hides them at the bottom of a drawer, showing them only to his relatives and friends. Every one is aware that the Chinaman is ignorant of painting in oils; if occasionally the artists of Canton have exercised this art in imitation of Europeans, their work cannot be considered but as short-lived attempts, confined to one locality.

As regards everyday furniture, the Chinaman is better supplied; his tables and cupboards are very

satisfactory, if less practical than ours and less finished. The toilet table is very simple, and you will never see in his house the elaborately fitted washing basin which modern invention has supplied to us. No architect has ever dreamt of such an astonishing device. As to his cupboards, their number is not to be compared with ours, the reason being that he has infinitely fewer articles to store, less clothing and linen. The Chinese cupboard has one particularly interesting arrangement; this is a large cavity in the lower part which is designed to keep the bundles of sapèques (small coins). China possesses a coin a thousand of which are required to make three francs. When the mistress of a house has but a hundred francs in this currency, it is easy to imagine that she requires a very spacious drawer to hold it.

Those who practise carpentry or cabinet-making have a very serious fault: when making panels or the backs of a piece of furniture, they simply lay the planks side by side, so that they do not form a fitted whole; in consequence, for valuable furniture very broad pieces of wood are required; the ordinary type would be worthless in our estimation, on account of the chinks between each plank.

The Chinese bed is very simple; occasionally very handsome carved examples are to be seen, but generally it resembles our most common form of bedstead. The canopy is the most remarkable part, ornamented in rich houses with beautiful embroideries. As for the bedding, properly so called, mattress and covers, there is little of it; the mattress is represented by a



thin layer of wadding between two pieces of cotton, as I have already pointed out, or again it is made of thick plaits of straw joined to form a rectangle some inches thick; it can even amount to no more than a simple mat of rushes, in summer as in winter, or more simple still, made of sheaths of *tsong tsien*, *traehycarpus excelsa*. The bedclothes are as meagre as the mattress. Needless to say, there is no spring mattress, no eiderdown, no bolster, no soft feather pillow, no woollen blanket. The iron bedstead has never been made; the Chinaman would be unable to construct it in the present state of his ancient metal industry.

The chair, which is to us an indispensable article of furniture, seems less so to the Chinaman; he prefers to lie at full length when he can, and he is quite content to squat on his haunches for long together, without the least fatigue. He has not therefore felt the need of perfecting the chair, or of fabricating its luxurious progeny – arm-chairs, sofas, couches. His chair is simple, massive, very large, and entirely of wood; rattan chairs are made only on the coast. These wooden chairs are, however, gracefully turned, and sometimes delicately carved. But they have always two disadvantages; the seat being of wood is too hard, and therefore disagreeable to an over-civilized part of our bodies; the rich, however, always place cushions upon it. Then the back is always strictly at right angles to the seat and never has a slant to allow for the natural attitude of the trunk in repose. The European thus quickly tires of the Chinese chair.

Having in the course of centuries never discovered

the art of glass-making, the Chinaman has no mirrors in which to admire himself, except those brought by us; the looking-glass industry was unknown to him until the arrival of the first Dutch and Portuguese traders. Up to the present time, he has not begun to practise it himself; formerly, he used a mirror of polished bronze.

## THE BUILDING INDUSTRY

I need not recapitulate what I have already said when I was describing the house, the mansion and the public building; I will only add a few words to allow of estimating the professional value of the various building craftsmen. As regards the carpenter, I will expand this discussion so as to describe him in his different functions.

The bricklayer is equal to ours; he is, however, less attentive, and it often happens that the verticality of a wall leaves much to be desired. He agrees with the architect that the foundations are always too deep; he reduces them in consequence to such a shallow depth that buildings frequently collapse. This accident often happens to the piles of a bridge when exposed to the shock of waters at the season of the summer floods. The walls of towns also crumble away in places quite often. I witnessed this at Chengtufu on two different occasions; the foundations being of very little depth, the enormous mass of bricks and mud wall standing 8 or 9 yards high above the soil were not provided with a sufficient base, and when the earth round the bottoms of the walls became softened by the action of

the heavy rains, and could no longer serve to prop them up, they fell away.

The Chinaman has not always built in this negligent manner; there are still standing some architectural works of very great antiquity in as good preservation as is permitted by the effects of exposure, and in spite of the Chinaman's evil habit of never repairing his buildings.

In describing furniture, I have said enough to indicate what the Chinese joiner can do; he puts his work together badly, and uses his plane carelessly. The cabinet-maker, on the other hand, is often a real artist.

The carpenter is a good workman, and his assembling of beams and joists leaves nothing to be desired. When he specializes and becomes the builder of boats, his task is more difficult, for the Chinese boatman is not guilty of an excess of prudence and foresight. Therefore the carpenter must use all his skill to give the maximum of solidity to a bark which will be subjected to the hardest tests, on rivers abounding in rapids, where an obstacle instead of being avoided seems rather to be sought out, and where the ordinary conditions of navigation include the necessity of towing with the line along the banks and round the rocky points. The result of his efforts is on the whole satisfactory; I was convinced of that during our ascent of the Yang-Tse; I was able to recognize this in the case of a large number of junks, and our own in particular.

The Chinese carpenter has never attained to the

dignity of a coach-builder; the only vehicle he has been called on to construct is the wheelbarrow: neither his ingenuity nor his knowledge have been sufficient for a more complicated piece of work. In the North, however, he can build a very primitive cart.

After the carpenter, I shall place the cooper, who is of the same family. He confines himself to making buckets and tubs, never having been able to develop his art so far as to plan and fashion our simple hogs-head; the double bottom has been his stumbling-block. Moreover, all the liquids of agricultural and industrial production are kept in jars or other earthenware and porcelain receptacles.

The blacksmith and the locksmith bear a very modest part in Chinese construction; the former makes only some coarse nails much inferior to the wooden pegs or pins generally in use. The kinds manufactured for furniture are of a very primitive make and extremely fragile; copper is used instead of iron. Door hinges are never made; the doors turn on pivots of wood. As to what we call door-plates, nothing in the art of Chinese smithery can approach them.

The locksmith is on the same level as his younger brother; his skill in his craft amounts to little compared with that of the European workman; his locks, or rather his lock, which is a padlock, cannot be named in the same breath as our simple lock, not to mention the astonishing combinations which guard the doors of our safes. The astounding thing is that for centuries and centuries, the Chinaman has always made the same lock, and has never invented another kind.

Ornamental ironwork is not applied to any portion of the Chinese house, and is never met with elsewhere; even the elegant lanterns which are to be seen hanging inside private houses or temples are mounted on a wooden framework.

In a word, when one considers the rôle of the craftsman in all branches of ironwork, one is forced to recognize that during the course of ages the Chinaman has made no progress, and has therefore been able to derive only mediocre advantage from this most valuable of products; he is quite unable to manufacture a respectable nail; the shovels or tongs to be found in the market, and other small implements in everyday use, are of the clumsiest kind. He is familiar with steel, but he can put it only to the most modest use, — that is to say, employ it in the manufacture of certain cutting instruments.

The great variety of ingenious tools which we possess have still to be created by the Chinaman. His are so primitive that it needs an extraordinary skill to get out of them as much as he does, especially when the work is that of the chaser or carver. Moreover, would anyone believe that he has never found out how to manufacture a screw?

The gunsmith knows how to manufacture the iron heads of lances, arrows and halberds, and also a clumsy musket that however has been made only since Europeans came into the country. I doubt very much whether it had any earlier origin, in spite of the knowledge of gunpowder, which is said to be a Chinese invention. In any case, it has never been developed,

and in recent times only imitations of our rifles have been made. The first bronze cannons to be used in war were cast under the direction of the Jesuits. The wooden or bamboo cannons of the preceding centuries were intended simply for use in public rejoicings; their efficiency doubtless did not allow of their being weapons of war.

It can be truly said that the activity of the Chinaman has never been directed towards gunsmith's work.

In short, China's iron industry remains still in the same primitive state as when it was first created by her far-back ancestors.<sup>1</sup>

In our country, the dwelling, to be complete and furnished with the usual improvements, requires the help of a workman whom we call the 'plumber and zinc worker' to fix the gutters and spouts and put up certain kinds of modern roofing. In China, the plumber's function is confined to the soldering of kitchen utensils or some insignificant system of lighting; he never has to occupy himself with any kind of tubing or pipe laying, an important branch of industry in our country. Taps, cocks, ball-valves and such-like are also unknown to him.

The Chinese roof-maker is in no way inferior to ours; his tiled roofs are well laid down, and some of those on the temples and turrets of public buildings are most elegant. He does not make flat roofs only; he has a variety made up of parallel rows of tiles alter-

<sup>1</sup> The great modern foundry at Han Yang was set up by a Luxembourg, M. Rupert.

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nately convex and concave; evidently this plan is most favourable to drainage. If there were gutters placed round such a roof the arrangement would be perfect.

The metal-worker or coppersmith of the yellow race, whether he works in cast-iron, iron, tin or copper, is far behind his white competitor. He manages copper and tin, however, better than iron. He makes little use of zinc.

### CLOCKWORK, JEWELLERY, SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS

The first examples of clock-making were introduced into China by the Dutch; this art was unknown to the Chinaman. Moreover, he has never learnt to make clocks and watches; he can repair them sometimes, but that is all.

As for jewellery, the Chinaman, as we know, is an expert in this art. The gold and silver articles which are to be found throughout the Empire are finely chased and of artistic taste; I have, however, never noticed such a profusion of original designs as to be found in our country. This people rarely breaks away from routine, from familiar types and patterns; they incessantly revert to them.

Gold and silversmith's work, with rare exceptions, is not a Chinese art.

As for the scientific instruments required for study or to meet the needs of industry and commerce, the Chinaman cannot be said to have invented anything under this head. He certainly possesses the compass, but besides this instrument he manufactures nothing for the purposes of topography, astronomy, meteorology,

applied mechanics, etc. He has never even discovered the thermometer, still less the special instruments required for demonstration of the physical sciences. And though in a more prosaic department, he has inevitably found a means of measuring weight, his balances are as little precise as they can be, and you will not find two in any town which indicate the same weight. The maker of balances for chemists has not been more successful than he who provides for merchants and money-changers. It is true that the want of precision in his work has not the same disadvantage as in Europe, for Chinese pharmacy has not yet reached the point of concocting extracts or powders. Nothing has been the cause of more disputes in the Celestial Empire than the readings of scales, especially when it is a question of money, which is always weighed, because there are no coins of fixed value.<sup>1</sup>

## THE LEATHER INDUSTRY

Tanning is an industry still in its infancy. The skins usually show that they have been badly prepared. According to the Mission sent from Lyons to China,<sup>2</sup> the skilful graduation of lime-steeping tanks is not known. Often the pieces are not tanned, but only burnt. In those districts where the nutgall is used, the skin being carbonized because of the uneven distribution of the lime, is insufficiently impregnated with tannin and becomes brittle. Hence one never

<sup>1</sup> For some twenty years, a coinage has been struck, but the real standard is subject to caution.

<sup>2</sup> Mission of commercial inquiry sent by Lyons to China.



sees in China that beautiful supple leather which is ordinarily made in Europe. Shoes naturally suffer from this; it is the same with saddlery, the workmanship of which bears no comparison with our productions. If you happen to break a strap of your saddle and you are obliged to replace it with one of untanned leather, you must constantly renew it for fear of accident. This leather tears like felt. It is needless to add that with such raw material, the Chinaman has never been able to achieve the beautiful applications of leather to upholstery or to ornament. Neither has he contrived to use it in bookbinding. Moreover, his books are not bound, even in cardboard, so that here is yet another industry, which is sometimes an art, still undiscovered by him!

I stop short in this enumeration, which would become too long if I persisted. It was not, however, without interest thus to exhibit by means of a short comparative study the true condition of industry in the oldest Empire in the world. I shall not speak of the ceramic industry. We know to what a high degree of perfection the Chinaman has raised it, and what artistic marvels he has produced. Nor shall I tell what skill, what delicacy of tones, he shows in working on bronze and ivory and in wood-carving. At the same time he has never attained the loftiness of conception and the powerful mastery of Greek or of modern sculpture.

CHAPTER IX  
AGRICULTURE

THE Chinaman is not a farmer, he is only a gardener. What we in France call *la grande culture* does not exist for him. His knowledge of the different varieties of soil, their composition, their special properties, their adaptation to particular crops, is of the most restricted kind. He uses only one sort of manure – human ordure – and despises all others. Rotation of crops, the use of artificial manures to convert sterile soil into fertile, and other improvements practised by us, are neglected by him. He will grow the same cereal on the same soil indefinitely; for instance, he sows maize year after year in some regions, without perceiving that the soil is becoming starved, and that the alternation of another crop would give the land rest, and thus assure a greater return.

I said just now that the Szechwan peasant is an excellent gardener; indeed one may admire the thriftiness which makes something out of the least bit of land; he does not waste a square yard of his field; he even considers the roads too wide and steals an inch from time to time; he never digs a ditch, nor puts up a bank unless absolutely obliged, for that would be waste of land. But he confines himself to the plains and the valley bottoms, and their slopes up to a certain height, that is to say to well-watered plateaus rich in fertile principles. Where the land is poor, lacking in humus, and requiring the addition of special manures – where fertility can only be assured by rotation of

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crops and methods of improvement adapted to its needs, — it is left barren, or yields only meagre produce of little nutritious value. There are thus vast stretches of land producing little or nothing, and these spaces are the larger because deforestation, pushed as far as the destruction of all forest and woodland, has ruined entire plateaus; no longer held together by the tree roots, they have been deprived of the last particle of their humus by the torrential summer rains.

Intensive culture of the same land, without restoring to it by well-chosen and sufficient plant food the fertilizing principles used up by the crop, has naturally had the result of reducing the yield. The ear of wheat in particular does not realize its fair promise. The grain is small and thin, and the Chinese method of harvesting it before maturity causes a further shrinkage. The same thing happens with other varieties of cereal, and the result is diminution of weight and quantity. If the large extent of cultivated land is taken into consideration, the loss on this head is considerable.

Fruits are treated in the same fashion; plucked green, they deteriorate rapidly, and half the crop gives no profit to the producer.

### STOCK-RAISING

Except for the breeding of pigs and farmyard fowls, it may be said that the Chinese have completely neglected this important branch of agricultural produce. They certainly keep oxen and buffaloes, but merely for ploughing; and if there were no Mussulmans in

China none but very old or crippled animals would be slaughtered. In the west of Szechwan and in the mountainous regions of Kouï Chou and of Yunnan, oxen are bred for the carriage of merchandise; but it is noticeable that most of the people who carry on this industry are aborigines, not true Chinese.

At Chengtufu and in the neighbourhood there are fairly large numbers of cattle, intended for the nourishment of the 30,000 or 40,000 Mussulmans who live in the town.

The breeding of horses and other equine species is also on a very small scale; Western China furnishes the greater part; the North also produces some. There is no reason why these animals should not be of excellent breeding, if they received the same care as in Europe, and particularly if more attention were given to careful selection. But I noticed at Szechwan that they stuff the horse with bran, straw and grass, but never give him such nutritious provender as barley and oats and maize. It is true that the production of cereals is so diminished by the various causes which I have just enumerated that nothing is left for animals when man is barely provided for. But, at any rate, some pasture-land could have been reserved for them; the necessity of meadow-land has, however, never been realized. As for selection, it is practised neither for the horse nor any other domestic animal. If a Chinaman happens to possess a fine beast, it never occurs to him to pair it with another of equal quality. Considerations of breed, age or health leave him indifferent, and unlike our French peasant he will never put him-

self out to find a good sire. Moreover, he acts in like manner with regard to his cereals and his seeds generally; he uses no selection there. Even the Breton, though apathetic enough, will from time to time bestir himself to replace some crop whose yield is diminishing; he will make inquiries as to what varieties of cereals and pulses are thriving in a neighbouring district, and will at once try them. Nothing like this is to be seen in China; no exchange of seed is made between the different districts or the different provinces; never is there an experimental field laid out either by Government or any private person. In every region they sow the same seed that their remote ancestors sowed thousands of years ago, and they will continue to sow it for long years yet.

The animal bred with most interest by the Chinaman is the pig; the breeds, however, which I saw in Szechwan and in other parts of China, leave much to be desired in development and quality of flesh, if they are compared with the superb species which selection and appropriate feeding have given to ourselves. I saw numerous types at the last Agricultural Exhibition in Paris, and these enormous animals of handsome appearance left far behind them the horrible Szechwan pig, small in girth, with flabby flesh and pendent belly and sunken often concave spinal column; it is to be found in an equally wretched condition in nearly every province.

The other domestic animals of the province are sheep and goats, but they are rarely found except in the mountainous parts of the west. The aborigines

breed them in large numbers, particularly the tribes known under the name of Lolos and Sifan. They use the wool to make coarse garments like those of the Thibetans.

The poultry yards possess some fine species of fowl, but always for the same reason, that is to say, absence of selection, they are inferior to our breeds in egg production and weight of flesh.

If we look for the explanation of the scanty development of stock-raising in China, particularly in the West, where conditions were specially favourable, it is to be found in the incapacity of the Chinaman to make something out of every kind of land, and to adapt his various soils to appropriate cultures. It was his firm belief that he could not live without rice, even in regions where corn and other cereals abounded. Therefore of the rich valleys which formed natural meadows he made rice fields, carrying them even to the flanks of the wooded hills, which were before the conquest the grazing grounds of immense herds. Though he was unable to flatten the summits of these hills for the cultivation of his favourite cereal, he nevertheless sowed them to their highest parts with other crops, first carefully uprooting every single tree. The consequence of this great blunder in a region where the rains are extremely violent at certain seasons was soon apparent. The fertile soil was carried away bit by bit by the rains, and very meagre was the harvest on an impoverished soil. Later there was complete sterility, the positive exhaustion of vast territories. And the flocks and herds which would have

made up for the insufficiency of nutritive grains no longer existed.

At the present time, the fact that the small number of animals constituting the actual reserve of food, that the pig whose flesh is so much in demand has the wretched appearance I have described, is due to the poverty of the general yield of the soil, overtaxed in some districts, while in others it has ceased to produce at all, – at any rate the kind of crop the Chinaman aims at obtaining from it, and in response to the methods which he applies.

## FORESTRY

This branch of agricultural cultivation with its varied needs has always been systematically disdained by the Chinaman, who has never realized that the forest is as indispensable as the arable land, and is in many regions its preserver. Not only has he laid waste all the wooded parts of his empire, but he has replanted nothing, or isolated trees only which imperious necessity has forced him to preserve, such as the cypress which is used for shipbuilding, and a small number of other species employed in building, and particularly for the fashioning of coffins. Already pines from Oregon are largely imported. China's last forest reserves were exhausted nearly fifty years ago, and if coal did not abound almost everywhere, one wonders what might happen. Such want of foresight is difficult for us to conceive. Even the trees crowning the summits of the hills – last protective shield of the slopes – have been everywhere cut down.

# AGRICULTURE

## AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES

*Implements.* – Agricultural implements have not varied in number or quality for centuries. The plough is the most primitive kind – a simple narrow share, not furnished with the great convex blade which increases the amount of earth turned up.

I have not seen a spade of our shape used in China; long and narrow, the Chinese spade reminds one rather of a pick.

The teeth of the rake are of wood, not iron.

A harrow with iron teeth is unknown.

For reaping, a small sickle is employed; this implement has never developed into a scythe. I do not know whether the scythe exists in any part of China; I have never met it in the Yang-Tse or in Szechwan, either in the South or in the North. I should be astonished to hear it existed anywhere.

Cereals are threshed with a flail, or are trampled underfoot by the beasts. No kind of threshing machine is known. The flail is even more primitive than ours; it moves only round a single axis, horizontal, and is therefore less manageable and less efficient.

The farmer's most highly developed machine is his winnowing-machine; it recalls that of our great-grandfathers.

To grind his corn the Chinaman uses mills with water-wheels, which differ from ours in that the wheel is never vertical, but horizontal, like a turbine. The arrangement of the millstones has remained in a primitive form, and with the wheat flour one gets the most



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wholemeal bread in the world. The bolter lets escape the richest bran I have ever seen, and the flour is never white.

Rice is rarely ground; at Chengtufu, rice flour is occasionally to be bought, but it is rarely used even for *pâtés*, being dearer than wheat. Other cereals and pulses are made into flour, often in mortars with a vertical grindstone. These are to be had in all dimensions, from very small ones for a single family to those of great size worked by animals.

### WOOD INDUSTRY

The small quantity of wood that remains to be worked in Szechwan does not require any great equipment; the axe and the handsaw alone are employed. The mechanical saw is yet to be discovered; even the hydraulic saw used in the Vosges, so simple, and at the same time so practical, is unknown. Chengtufu receives still every year some thousands of feet of cypress and fir for building junks, but these firs are never of large size, the masts of their largest vessels not exceeding the dimensions of a gaff in our sailing-ships.

### DISTILLING

I refer to this industry here because, far from being practised on a large scale, as in France, it is usually a small private affair, carried on outside the large centres of industry. Growers who distil alcohol from their own products still exist in China.

What is called at Chengtufu a great distillery is only

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a modest affair. Grains only are distilled – wheat, little esteemed as a food, rice, maize and sorghum are mainly used. The product obtained, *tsicou*, is often translated as ‘wine,’ but it is never wine in the sense we understand, for grapes are not used except for dessert; it is really what we call ‘spirit.’ Except two or three varieties which with age become tolerable to our taste, the Chinese ‘wines’ are abominable gripers, intoxicating quickly, and producing serious disorders arising from congestion. The reason is that the still they employ is the most primitive of primitives, and that the processes of purification and rectification of alcohol are totally unknown to them. The spirit thus retains all the ethers whose noxious effects the study of organic chemistry has revealed to us.

## COMMERCE

The Chinaman has long been a past master in trade, but he remains a petty dealer. For though he is extremely clever in directing small affairs, and displays every imaginable trickery to secure the greatest possible profit, he is far from having the same capacity for big business. He is incapable of large enterprises which call not only for intelligence and a certain skill but also for continuity – a foresight ever prepared and a vigilance never at fault. The Chinaman is far from possessing these qualities. As banker and business man, he is simply a short-term lender, a usurer speculating on crops or on the earnings of the small manufacturer or artisan. As for large operations, the vast speculations of modern finance, they are

beyond his strength. His speculations, which are very frequent, are in the category of games of chance rather than of plans fully prepared. Knowledge of the great economic factors of wealth, and the profound study of achievements whose possibility arises from political and social changes, from progress attained, or from new inventions, rest outside his competence and his capacity; his brain is not adapted to vast combinations. But once the path has been laid down and the plan suggested, he becomes a marvellous agent whose loyalty can be relied on. Even in small daily transactions with the European, the Chinaman is scrupulously honest; during the discussion of an affair he will endeavour by every possible means to increase his personal gain, but once the bargain has been struck there is no more loyal partner.

In his relations with his own countrymen as customers, the petty dealer is far from employing the same methods. Nowhere more than in China do we find a mania for adulterating all the products which can be adulterated. Foodstuffs rarely escape this dishonest practice; the expression '*fa chow*' very commonly employed indicates the simplest operation, which is the addition of moisture to meat, rice, etc. Cheating over weight and measure is also universal, and so much a habit of the dealer that he always has two balances, one for buying and the other for selling. These frauds are aided by the want of precision in these instruments, furnishing the trader with an ever-ready excuse. Moreover, weights and measures vary in the case of heavy goods; a pound is not a pound at

every moment of the day; if normally it is 16 oz., it can under certain conditions of sale be brought down to 14 or 15 oz. If you buy a basket of coal, for instance, at a given price, which ought normally to weigh 200 lb., it may well happen that after weighing it you will find only 175 lb. You point this out to the dealer, and inquire the price of this new quantity of coal; he requires calmly that the price of the basket does not change, since it always contains 200 lb., only the pound has no longer the customary number of ounces, although it always remains a pound. These foolish explanations would continue indefinitely if you did not stop them. But whatever you do, whatever precautions you take, you are robbed ninety-nine times out of a hundred. Not only do the weights and measures vary in the same locality for most goods, according to the state of the market or the whim of a guild, but they vary also in different provinces of the empire. Provision of a certain weight sent from Chengtufu will be found underweight 30 miles away, and the difference would become much more appreciable if the journey is extended, and the consignment is destined to cross the boundaries of Szechwan.

To comment on this fact would be idle.

The small Chinese middleman has wiles of which we are ignorant; one of the best known among grain merchants, for instance, consists in knowing how to pour rice, wheat, peas or haricots into the measure in such a way as to make it hold the least possible quantity; and if the European buyer plays on the vendor the joke of ordering a servant to stir up the bushel

in order to make the contents settle, the poor man, very much put out, declares that he will be ruined.

Where articles of exportation are concerned these frauds are the more mischievous since the quality and value of the goods are often considerable; yet deception is carried on not less frequently, and often so unskilfully that its author is the first sufferer. Thus in the early days of the exportation of rhubarb from Szechwan to France and England, the sale was so easy and profitable that the native exporters set themselves to increase the quantity by adding the maximum moisture to the roots. Naturally they grew mouldy on the way to the coast, and the shipper at Shanghai refused them. The losses suffered in this way were necessary to teach the Szechwan rhubarb dealers a better idea of commerce.

Musk, a very valuable product, is adulterated with animal blood or with bean flour. Wool and feathers are most frequently mixed with substances of every kind designed to increase weight. These gross frauds to a certain extent effect their own cure because of the difficulty of sale.

The dealers of distant provinces in commercial relations with Europeans are thus led little by little to adopt the usages of their compatriots in the open ports.

## CLASSES OF SOCIETY

TO understand China and its social system, it will be convenient first to define the mandarin, the man of the lettered class, and to show him as he has been for centuries. The revolution of 1911 has certainly brought about some changes, but they are more apparent than real. The costume, the insignia, have been modified, but not the spirit and the inclinations of the *literati*, the men in authority. Thus the new style mandarin wears a military dress-coat, and carries a sword, but more than ever is his authority absolute and without appeal. As for the literary man of the old style, he is replaced by the present-day student, still more tyrannical, especially since he has been organized in committees of public safety.

There exists in China an all-powerful aristocracy, the aristocracy of knowledge; it is called the class of *literati*. They alone have the right to place and honour;<sup>1</sup> they alone can aspire to play a part in the Empire, to wield any influence whatever. As they govern, dispense justice, control, almost without appeal, every act of the political, social and economic life of the Chinese people, it is easy to understand what redoubtable powers they possess. In a country where there exists no representation of the popular will, where the citizen has not yet come to the birth, and where the ignorant feel an almost religious respect for the lettered, it would seem almost impossible to make a

<sup>1</sup> An exception must be made to-day for the Tu-Chun, or military dictator.

breach in this immense authority. The sole source of weakness in this unique aristocracy lies in the mutual jealousies of mandarin to mandarin, and the frequent denunciations before the central power of which each is the object. Though these denunciations of a governor come sometimes from the people or from the rich merchant class, it is none the less true that they originate rather in the calumnies and slanders of rivals greedy to step into their shoes, or to satisfy some personal spite.

The indisputable and undisputed superiority of the lettered class is shown, in ordinary life, by numerous privileges. First of all and before all, in a country where corporal punishment is always applied, the *chen se* (lettered) escapes this humiliation. Even when without official place, and buried in his own village, he is the great authority, and the old men invested with administrative powers by the mandarin, dare not make a decision without first consulting the *tou chou jen* (the man who has studied books).

To distinguish himself from the vulgar herd, he had the right to wear a special head-dress. And, as he who handles the 'paint-brush' cannot have the short broken nails of the artisan, he wore them very long; and, when his purse allowed, protected them with a fine jade cover. The long nail was the characteristic of supremacy, the symbol of an aristocracy, which was of all the most firmly established. But where this man was separated most distinctly from the others, where he best affirmed his social privilege, was when he adjudged the beliefs which were not to be those of

the common people, and created a religion for himself, the religion of the literati (*fou kiao*).

When he enters office and becomes a mandarin (*tang kouan*) his privileges are naturally augmented in number and importance. His costume is also clearly distinguished from that of other classes by special insignia; there are even certain stuffs and furs which are his exclusive appanage, which the richest merchant is not permitted to wear. His head-dress also is never like other people's; the *cha tai*, the hat invested with the traditional globule, indicates and establishes the whole extent of his dignities and his official authority. He must never mingle with the crowd, to be elbowed or hustled; he must be carried in a palanquin, which adds greatly to his prestige. Carried thus throughout his career above the heads of the herd of which he is the shepherd, he shows himself to these humble people, high and majestic, motionless as a bedecked idol, with his collar of coral ribbon sewn with pearls, with his red or blue *tin tze* (globule) and nodding peacock's feather; he appears to them such that they see in him and in his dreaded strength an emanation of the omnipotence of the *houang-ti*, of him who governs heaven and earth.

The mandarin's palanquin is always accompanied by a more or less numerous escort, according to the importance of the personage; heralds cry his name, his titles, his dignities, his virtues, and for those who can read the whole is inscribed on the tablets, the *kao kio pan*, carried by the valets. And the crowd of coolies, peasants, labourers and shopkeepers must get out of



the way in order not to impede the passage of the procession.

The mandarin's dwelling has also its special architecture; the number of blocks, of courtyards, and of gates, is not left to chance, nor does it depend on the wealth of the owner; the most opulent merchant is not allowed to have as many gates as he wishes.

These sumptuary traditions tended naturally to increase the glory of imperial authority everywhere, and those who were clad in authority thus received greater honour, amounting to such privileges as appear to us in contradiction of the principle of the Chinese constitution, which aims at social equality, and, by the examination system, opens wide the doors of access to power.

In the exercise of his administrative functions, the mandarin condescends sometimes to call together the *literati* and chief elders of the division, but their views are purely advisory; the decision remains entirely subject to his personal concern for justice, or to his simple caprice, and it is always easy for him to abuse his authority. The tradesmen's guilds rarely venture to revolt; as for the *pé sin*, the small people, if it should happen one day in a district that they depose their governing official by carrying him away in a chair to the chief town of the division, the occurrence is so rare as to be cited merely to be saved from oblivion.

Furnished with his halo of literary knowledge, which in principle confers on him every kind of qualification for governing, the mandarin has fixed his pedestal so high that all the classes which gravitate around him are almost ashamed of the duties or the

special work which have fallen to their lot. Manual work of whatever kind, and however noble in its achievements, is despised in China. Every individual who wields any instrument but the paint-brush, the Chinaman's pen, is a being without fame or influence, and deserves no more attention from his fellow-countrymen than the beast of burden who drags his load in order to earn his evening pittance.<sup>1</sup> Poets and philosophers vie with each other to celebrate the sacred task of the ploughman, – a whole vocabulary of marvellous epithets is applied to him: the *houang-ti* himself will deign every year to leave his sanctuary to open a furrow, but all these demonstrations intended to honour the most indispensable of callings have no other aim than to give it a little 'face,' – a false lustre; never does he receive effectual protection against the bandits of the countryside, real help translated into action. Such boons remain in the domain of vague aspirations, with which the man of the fields has to feed himself.

The habits of the person so much admired and envied have had a curious influence upon hygiene throughout the empire; no Chinaman will walk unless absolutely obliged to do so. Whenever he can afford a chair he will take one; he will never try to save his money by making use of his legs. Notice also that he uses a palanquin less from laziness or personal con-

<sup>1</sup> One of our learned scientists, if he were carrying on an experiment in his laboratory, would appear to the Chinaman as a simple labourer, not a *tou chou jen* (a man who studies books). This spirit, however, tends to be modified, and will alter more and more.

venience than as a tribute to decorum. He is being carried through the streets in a similar vehicle to the mandarin's; what a satisfaction to his self-respect! The well-to-do classes act thus so naturally that they no longer think of the origin, the first cause of this unwholesome custom. In short, except when it is a matter of definite obligation, it is degrading to walk.<sup>1</sup> I shall long remember the remark which a Chinese neighbour in Chengtufu made one day, at the moment when some German officers, passing through the town, accosted me when I was crossing the road on horseback. These officers were on foot; the cool weather had tempted them to take a walk, and they were quietly strolling about the town. My neighbour, when he caught sight of them, looked them over from head to foot, and then, turning to the members of his family, said plainly that these people were *siao jen* (foreign coolies). Just imagine, they were not in chairs! And they were wearing khaki, and this in a country where the frock makes the monk.

The mandarin has no social relations with other classes: he lives entirely in his clan. He condescends to no one except his employees, and above all his servants; to these are allowed such familiarities as would astonish us, who are nevertheless greater lovers of equality. They have the right to enter any room, except the women's quarters; they do not give themselves the trouble of listening at doors, but enter with ease into the room where their master is discussing

<sup>1</sup> This is not the case in the great cities where European influence has penetrated.

his private affairs. If their master at a given moment should be reading a letter which has just been brought him, those of the underlings present who can read handwriting will approach him, and read it over his shoulder. When the clauses of an official contract are being debated, as I had occasion to observe at the time when the organization of our medical school was being arranged, the servants stand in the hall, very near the mandarins, and assist in the discussion quite at their ease, ending by knowing all the decisions taken. In a word, it is a family party. When the master goes out to dine, if the porters of the palanquin and the followers are of opinion that he has had enough sustenance and diversion, they let him know, and it is rare for their suggestion to fall on deaf ears.

The servants intervene constantly in the various acts of the official and private life of the mandarin. These manners have a patriarchal side which is somewhat astonishing in a country where the privileges and unlimited powers of a caste are savagely defended. Is it because such humble subjects of the Emperor as the servant class are not considered by the lords of the Celestial Kingdom other than a negligible quantity? This explanation is the more plausible as in China our customary morning greeting from subordinate to master does not exist: the salutation of an inferior cannot honour a great man, and would be considered a misplaced familiarity. Our European servant's daily mark of deference is replaced here by the great salutation of *ko teou*, in which the inferior goes down on his knees, and bends his head to the ground;

this is rarely practised – on New Year's Day, for instance, or on the occasion of the birthday of the head of the house. The coolie, the day labourer, the artisan who comes to work at your house, will not allow himself to salute you; he will arrive and depart, without appearing to notice you.

The *ko teou* is still the usage when anyone approaches a mandarin to present a petition or to solicit a favour from his benevolence. The language will always be very humble, while the suppliant is prostrating himself. '*Siao ti kieou ta lao ye*' – 'I, little one, supplicate the venerable lord.' Thus the tradesman or farmer expresses himself, when coming to implore a favour from a simple sub-prefect.

I will not dwell longer on the mandarin, but say a few words about the business man and the workman. At no time can a representative of the trading class, however rich and well-informed he may be, aspire to hold any particle of authority: his influence on the Government and on the course of public business is nil. Fortune, however, can give him a certain independence and allow him to exercise a moderating influence, when he thinks necessary, on the arbitrary mandarin. The game, however, is risky if he is not assured at the start of the co-operation of powerful auxiliaries, chosen from the privileged class; otherwise he incurs the danger of losing property and freedom. In the open ports, the independence of the merchant is much greater than in the interior, and his financial security better assured; nevertheless, like a prudent man, he does not fail, whenever a rapacious Govern-

ment official is casting a covetous eye on his fortune, to put it in the safe custody of a European bank, or to carry on his business under an English, French or American name. In short, the commercial co-operation of the white race with the yellow has resulted in giving more freedom to a class which is contributing powerfully by its activity to the prosperity of its country. These business dealings have also another consequence no less important: they tend to bring together these peoples, so unlike each other; they come to know each other, and to appreciate each other, and thus prepare a way for a more intimate and fruitful understanding between races equally great in civilization and intelligence.

The workman, whether of the countryside or of the town, is far from having in China the important position he is attaining more and more in the countries of Europe and America.<sup>1</sup> If he forms unions or rings, his influence is hardly at all increased with Government; it appears all the feeblener because he lacks the sinews of all war, money, — he so poor, so ill provided for, in comparison with his white brother. From time to time he has outbursts of rage, he utters his lamentations, his cry of distress and his demand for a less bitter destiny; but his noisy complaints, like his supplications of earlier days, fall on deaf ears. The mandarin, who is the arbitrator, is raised too

<sup>1</sup> In the great ports, nevertheless, Dr. Sun Yat Sen has created real syndicates, Trades Unions in imitation of the English Labour Party. The Bolshevik has found out how to make the most profit out of them.

high above him, he can turn a deaf ear to his clamour with impunity; often at the same time judge and party to the case, by a secret understanding with the heads of the business, he cannot hesitate between his own interest and that of the workmen. Besides, there is nothing coming in to alleviate the suffering of the strikers, to make it profitable; there is nothing to guarantee to-morrow's rice. Thus the anguish of never being sure of the daily pittance is perpetuated through the centuries! If we do not come to the help of China, bringing to her our contribution of more vigorous, more productive effort, because enlightened and directed by science, this lamentable poverty, far from diminishing, can only increase, and, with the gradual growth of the population, can become still more terrible.

A very interesting clan of this great class of manual workers is that of the coolies or porters. As there are very few draught animals in China, while, on the other hand, the state of the roads, except in the North, prevents the use of any vehicle but the wheelbarrow, it has been necessary to organize a means of transport by land (even in a country so well watered river transport does not suffice), and man alone supplies this need. There are millions in this vast empire, sweating and panting along the highways and along abominable paths, in all seasons, dragging at the end of a bamboo their heavy burden, or carrying on their shoulders the cumbersome palanquin. They go jogging along under the scorching sun, or in the north wind, stopping for a moment to take breath, to wipe the sweat from their brows, or hold their benumbed

hands to the fire; they go along, poor beasts of burden, barely covered with a rag, resigned, without complaining, to the evening's halting-place, to the palliasse swarming with vermin, where, in spite of everything, their poor ulcerated aching bodies will sink into heavy sleep.

In Szechwan and elsewhere, the corporation of porters is divided into wheelbarrow men, palanquin carriers, *kiao fou*, bamboo porters, *tiao fou*, and porters who carry loads on their backs, *pei tze*, in the Alpine regions, where this mode of transport, little used in China, is rendered obligatory by the steep gradients and inclines which he must traverse every day and at any moment. The porter carrying his load on his back is forced to terrible effort in bringing tea and salt from Szechwan to Ta-Tsien-Ton. You must have met him on the mountain paths, as I have done many a time, bent double, his sides heaving, panting for breath like the bellows of a forge, obliged to rest every five minutes, digging into the ground and in time hollowing the rocks with the iron tip of his *kouai tze* (a short stick, the handle of which has been replaced by a horizontal board to hold the burden in the moment of rest); you must have been a witness to his labours to realize how quickly he is worn out—to understand what a waste of energy there has been in China for thousands of years, in that China has not known how to make the most of her soil, and to find land suitable for breeding beasts of burden. If, again, these men were highly paid; but no, their remuneration is scarcely sufficient, it assures them only



just the daily pittance. Many a time at the evening's halting-place, on the road over the Szechwan Alps, I noticed with what astonishment and envy the porters stopping at the inn regarded my little fox-terrier, and the Consul's dogs, for whom there was brought on arrival a bowl of rice with meat. There was profound stupefaction; how could anyone serve to dogs such succulent, desirable food! In China the dog is not the subject of the same care as in Europe: rather he is held in contempt; no food is given him, he lives on garbage and carrion. The Chinaman never throws to him the leavings of his meal, he gives that to his pig. — Yes, they did not understand, they who often had to content themselves with maize cakes, which they carried stuck on a bamboo above their load! They understood all the less because in China the food ration for all classes of the population is most restricted, the rice or the bread is measured out so that what is meant for the man could never go to the dog.

There have been ascribed to these poor coolies sentiments which are rarely to be met with in any country in a class whose depressing toil does not favour the hatching of poetical imaginations, which have been drawn from their kind of work and the particular conditions of their lives. It is the literary man, in want of a fine phrase, or wishing to idealize a situation, who creates these ideas, and adorns with them these poor miserable wretches, whose destiny seems to him in its naked reality too painful. It is again the philanthropic philosopher speaking, his whole soul vibrating with an immense pity in contemplating such a social neces-

sity, devouring energies which would have been utilized better by a more far-seeing race, a race more desirous to progress. It is pretended then that the coolie, like the bargeman, loves his work, however rough it is; that he will not at any price hear a word of easing his labour by the intervention of the inventive genius of the European; that if the day's task is painful, he has his compensations in life in the open air, sound sleep, and above all the incomparable happiness of full and entire freedom. Truly, only those who do not know the Chinaman, and can have made the most superficial observation of him, could form such a judgment on his mentality. On the contrary, in reality his is the most prosaic race in the world, the least sensitive to what does not concern his comfort and his food. Fresh air, sunshine, a free life, sound sleep! He would laugh in your face if you spoke to him about such things, and you would in vain attempt to explain them to him, he would never understand you. Fresh air, sunshine! But the Chinaman who can avoid them; and who can afford to stay shut up in his dark house, gossiping or dozing or smoking his pipe of tobacco or opium, will never go a step outside to breathe the pure air, to enjoy the verdure and blossom of the countryside. Never, do you hear. When he shows you the beds of his garden, the pond where a few lotuses vegetate, the artificial rock simulating a hillock, it is because he considers that this caricature, this profanation of nature, has put him in unison with sensitive refined souls of poetic imagination, who sing of streams and lakes and bamboos. And he is

enchanted with his counterfeit; and never thinks of passing through the gates of his town to admire the real nature of the fields. If he does leave the town it is to go to a famous pagoda, instal himself in a pavilion under the smiling eyes of the temple guardians, and — feast.

To the country itself he is quite indifferent. As for the poor coolie, who has to run about the high roads, give him a prison (not his own, which is a hell), but ours so comfortable, where his bread and rice are sure, and all these people will be happy to go there and stay there all their lives; he attaches no disgrace to this place as we do.

Sound sleep! Whoever has lived in China cannot have failed to remark that the inhabitant sleeps little, that he makes as short as possible the repose of the night, gossiping and amusing himself for hours, sure to make up for it in the daytime if he has leisure. He seems to appreciate much less than we a long period of slumber, and in the course of my journeys I always saw that the bargeman and the porter went very willingly in the evening to the opium den, or if they could not afford that they would stay in the inn chattering there until an advanced hour of the night instead of hurrying to bed. As for the supposed hatred of the mariner against the steam-boat, it does not originate at all in any love he has for his calling, a love which is naïvely described as passionate; but rather in the firm conviction that this vessel will kill the junk, and will take away his miserable pittance.

This explanation, if it is not as poetical as the other,

has at least the merit of simplicity and of revealing the actual truth, without periphrases. Suppose that means were found – and they do exist, easily realizable – to improve the present state of affairs while providing the bargemen with a new livelihood, all serious opposition would at once disappear. It is the same with the porters, who have no special passion for their present existence, which is indeed slow homicide; if it were proposed to them to change their work for that of our road-menders or railroad navvies, they would not hesitate for a moment, still less to work under shelter in any factory, like their brothers of Shanghai or Hong-Kong. Instead of seeing only inextricable situations and opposition impossible to overcome, which one is careful to explain and justify to oneself by affected fancies of no value except to put a false lustre on sad reality, and even impede the search after a sane solution, – instead of looking at these problems in a poetical manner, would it not be better to confine oneself to register simple facts, leaving the interpretation to those who come into real contact with the Chinese?

But though the coolie has not the love for his calling which has been imputed to him, he nevertheless looks at its multiple miseries with perfect serenity. He is not a morose nor a melancholy being; rather he is cheerful, – I had almost said, contented; I have seen the sadness of the poor lost creature, weary of falling by the roadside, only in the face of the *ien pei tze*, the salt porter, across the Szechwan Alps. There indeed it is calvary, the sorrowful way, indefinitely prolonged, and when he escapes death by the precipice or the

freezing cold or the heavy snows of winter, he dies prematurely from the early wearing out of his over-taxed organs. But in the valley of the Yang-Tse, as elsewhere, the coolie is always gay and careless, enjoying trifles like the child that he is. On the broken road, lamentable in the rainy season, when he gets caught in the sticky mud or rolls over into a puddle, he never thinks of insulting this abominable way but names it poetically *houa houa lou*, the flowery road!

He is also an intolerable chatterer, never stopping his talk, and making jests on every pretext – and such jests, very smart jests, sometimes. A group of porters never gets fagged; their verve is inexhaustible and also wearisome for those who understand them and consent to submit to them. The *kiao fou* (chair porters) easily turn into little tyrants over those of our race who do not know the conditions of travel, and cannot understand some of their actions; they quickly abuse his ignorance. But when the European is familiar with people and things and knows what he wants, these worthy Chinamen become the most easily managed people in the world, and from tyrants they turn into submissive slaves. The hauler is unbearable when he has to drag the junk of some European novice, just landed in China; but when the European has learned to know him and direct him, he will submit to any fancy; he obeys without a murmur even when the heavy rain is falling and a wind is blowing, in circumstances which sometimes cause great inconvenience in descending the Yang-Tse. Even then he

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goes on at the invitation of the white man, quite surprised at his own pliancy, he the great, civilized, proud yellow man. And when in spite of rain and wind he has traversed numerous *lis*,<sup>1</sup> his reflections are amusing, and above all his astonishment at having travelled on when the proper thing was to cast anchor and take shelter in a creek: 'How droll it is,' he related. 'Look how this European has made us go on in all this wind and heavy rain, and in spite of the world's being turned upside down, we got over a great stretch of the way and without any damage: it's really funny!'

The inveterate habit of rowers on the descent of the Yang-Tse is to stop at the first puff of wind: they instantly come to the conclusion that the breeze is going to increase, and that it is prudent to lie by. But the European, who also knows the danger of navigating the river in a high wind with a flat-bottomed junk whose forecastle is very tall, does not however forget that progression is possible as long as the wind does not exceed a certain strength, and if he is able to impose his authority the boat will go with the current and will travel a great distance instead of remaining anchored to the shore.

Oh the brave fellows, always merry, always laughing, always docile, when one has learned how to rule them! Precious helpers whom one hopes to meet with again.

### THE AGRICULTURIST

In China, more than anywhere else, the peasant is the resigned and needy insect whose ideal is bounded

<sup>1</sup> Measure of distance.

by the hope of a good harvest. More than any other class he has not a vestige of influence, living as he does in the middle of his land and aiming at a tranquillity which is too often denied him, for in the empire no one as much as the man of the fields is the victim of easy oppression. Thus when he has satisfied the tax gatherer, he must reckon with all the *tou fei*, bandits, who become particularly pressing at certain seasons, — harvest time, for instance. At this season the labourer must sleep in the fields, or if he is a small proprietor must pay guardians. And when he has gathered in his crops very often the bandits come one day and signify to the unfortunate man that he must let them collect a tithe.

He generally allows this, and does not defend himself. It happens thus in the Min Valley, at least, and the situation is not very different in the rest of the empire. If the land were not so parcelled out, and there existed more proprietors of substance with means for action and resistance, the lot of the agriculturist would be less precarious and a more efficacious protection would be assured him, partly by pressure on the mandarin, but mainly thanks to a police force organized by those interested, — all who live by the culture of the soil. But the Chinese peasant is incapable of any such effort. The only protest he makes, when too much has been ground out of him, is directed against the fiscal administration, and consists of a refusal to bring his beasts and grains and vegetables to the market on a certain day. But this revolt is rare, and he gets no great benefit from it.

One sees that the situation of the Chinese agriculturist is not to be envied: without any instruction, even of a practical character, ignorant of everything but his calling, a man of routine to excess, opposed to any method which was not his ancestors', he is condemned for a long time yet to a precarious existence without any prospect of betterment. Moreover, I should not like to say that he has ever dreamed of a better lot; his desires, like his outlook, are very limited. He sincerely believes that his methods of culture are infallible, and that no other methods exist; he is convinced, in short, that he is the best agriculturist in the world. This quite platonic satisfaction is, for those who know the Chinese, a soothing balm of astonishing efficacy. The pride of this race explains its resignations.

The labourer would not suffer from the mediocrity of his lot, if there were no taxes and no bandits. When he has appeased even their rapacity, he experiences the dreary contentment of the man who has not been robbed of everything, and, surrounded by his family, his beasts, and even his gods, father, grandfather and ancestors, he has nothing definite to wish for. His consolations and his hopes of future abundance of the fruits of the earth rest entirely on the little shelf, the *chen chou*, where the spirits of his ancestors reside, and at the appointed hour before the *hiang ki*, the family altar, he officiates every day, as priest of his own cult.

There remains to me to describe those whom I will call the outcaste classes, the *ti teou tsiang*, hairdresser, the *hsi pan tze*, comedian, and the *kao houa tze*.

The hairdresser is thus relegated to the lower



stratum of Chinese society, because his trade obliges him to work standing, while his most miserable customer is seated. In the empire the positions 'seated' or 'lying' constitute an authority which the hairdresser at work can never enjoy. To plane a piece of wood, to plough a furrow, to push a wheelbarrow, or drag a load are still respectable professions, of prime utility, but the office of hairdresser seems to every one to be degrading in some way. He rarely has a shop in the street; he carries his apparatus about with him all day, entering any house where he is summoned, or installing himself at inn doorways. He is a very busy personage, for never in any circumstances of life does a Chinaman shave himself; he is greatly astonished to see the European commence that operation. However impoverished he is, as soon as he has some few necessary sapèques, he invites a *ti teou ti* to shave him and cut his hair.

After the hairdresser comes immediately the *kao houa tze*, the beggar: this gnawing canker of China, always hideous, this corporation which contains nothing to excite interest, for it is the dregs of the population, formed of unwholesome and incorrigibly idle elements, rather than poor cripples and invalids — this corporation, however, does not stand on the lowest rung of the outcaste ladder. The beggar stands above the *hsi pan tze*, the comedian; the latter is much more despised. It is known that he is actor and actress at the same time, that he plays all rôles, very often, even under concrete forms. He is in his right place in the social ladder established by the son of Han.

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### GENERAL CULTURE OF THE SOCIAL CLASSES

The means of education are sufficiently general in China, and yet the number of illiterates is considerable. What, however, is of practical importance is that all studies are purely literary and philosophical, and that the Chinese are ignorant of all the modern physical and natural sciences, — an unfathomable gap which goes a long way to explain the social and economic stagnation of centuries in one of the oldest civilizations in the world. Letters, in fact, though they adorn the mind, enlarge the domain of thought and embellish life, cannot give that solidity, that vigour and sureness of judgment which is conferred by the study of science. Similarly, all the philosophic speculations in the world could not be productive of those amazing advances in the material and moral sphere, whose beginning goes back to those new ways which the brain of the white race opened for itself. The Chinaman, never having been capable of such an effort, lives in the past on the patrimony of his ancestors of thousands of years ago. By his choice of subject, by the imperfect instrument to his hand, his written language, so complicated and so involved that the whole life of learned men is occupied in deciphering it, he has succeeded in developing his memory to the detriment of his reasoning powers. Having to store his brain with too many formulas, too many tortuous and fanciful signs from which all method is excluded, he has overworked it, and has deprived it of all flexibility. He has stuffed his brain, imagining

that he was nourishing it, and behold, it has remained sterile, without producing the energy expected from it, and henceforth and for a long time to come it will be incapable of creative reaction. Yet if the Chinaman had been able to diagnose his disease and discover the causes, what immense benefits might result for him and for humanity, and all the greater because he is the pacifist *par excellence*!

Thus, absorbed in his book of verse or speculative philosophy, the Chinaman has never discovered the composition of air and water, and in consequence a thousand things in his surroundings, placed there to develop his well-being, and increase his wealth, are hidden from him. And his pride is so enormous, and so strong is his conviction that he has realized in everything the highest and the best, that he refuses to acknowledge in European inventions anything other than a sort of magic, without intellectual basis. Our sciences are little appreciated by him; they partake of the knowledge of the alchemist, the astrologer, or of a necromancer more astute than his own, and better inspired by the spirits. All this nonsense draws its inspiration, in his opinion, from occultism. He, on the contrary, cultivates letters, and though he has no machines he has *ouen tchang*, literary composition, and thus he soars above all the peoples. If you tell him that you too have a weakness for literature, that your race loves it, and has been brought up on it for centuries, and still feeds on it, your assertion is received with a polite smile but complete incredulity. He alone has been nourished by the Muse, he alone

has been able to form sound and fruitful maxims for the building up and the maintenance of an empire. Greek and Roman literature and the history of the brilliant nations who produced it are totally unknown to him; his chroniclers have done little more than indicate certain commercial relations which the Celestial Empire has had with the Ta-Tsin, whom they believe to have been Latins. In the last twenty years, however, the sciences which they call European have been admitted into the official curriculum.

Nor has the Chinaman knowledge of the external world as it is (exception must be made naturally of certain privileged persons who have been sent to Europe or the United States) either through his geography or his books. The science of geography for him is bounded by his own empire, and while a French child of thirteen knows what the Yellow River is or the Gulf of Petchili, a Chinese child or the most learned mandarin of the lettered classes has perhaps heard of Europe, but has no idea of its configuration, of the seas that wash its shores, or the rivers that water it. A small European's education includes lessons on all sorts of things, by the use of museums, exhibitions, books filled with pictures, where the known world with all its fauna and flora is spread out before him in an almost palpable form. More than that, many of our towns have public gardens where exotic plants, and often wild animals, are exhibited for every one to see, so that a child sees them and distinguishes them as soon as he learns to recognize the domestic animals of his own country. The Chinese child has no such

means of instruction; nothing of the kind exists in his towns, and more than that he will not find in his master's books the best of all instructions, — the picture.

The technique of teaching in the Celestial Empire confined itself up to less than twenty years ago to a perpetual recitation, where the auditory memory played the principal part, the visual memory having much less to do. While our educational system improves every day, that of the Chinaman has remained unchanged until the last few years. Now, however, under the pressure of historic events, the Confucian programme has been modified.

To sum up, the child of the white race is a savant compared to his little yellow brother, and as far as knowledge of the outside world, its oceans and continents, he is better informed than the whole crowd of old Chinese mandarins.

During these last years there has been a good deal of translating and editing of the Annals of the Empire; it is acknowledged that the authors have recorded with great care all sorts of small details, which will serve to throw light on ancient history. But what strikes one, in reading these works, is the total absence of serious criticism and explanation of the events recorded: they are simply chronicles, not those immortal works which certain men of Greece and Rome brought forth, works which, in describing the life of an empire, light up a whole period of the evolution of humanity.

ECONOMIC POSITION OF THE  
VARIOUS CLASSES OF SOCIETY

FROM the foregoing statement one will naturally expect certain inevitable economic consequences resulting from the neglect of all scientific education in China up to recent years. The Chinaman's first conquests in agriculture and industry had one day an abrupt check in their course, his intelligence having reached the maximum of efficiency on the path on to which it had been shunted. To make further advances, he would have had to examine nature, to scrutinize, to analyse, not to dream; he would have had to seek out a new field of action, enter upon a new struggle, and cease to celebrate the victories of the past, and hypnotize himself in the contemplation of faded laurels. What more would have been required? Not to look behind him towards the achievements of his ancestors, but to throw himself forward, in order to develop them, ennoble them, and spread the dazzling rays as far as the confines of the most backward of barbarian peoples. But no, the Chinaman has felt no joy in effort, and, delighting in a fatal repose, he has remained the simple imitator of his ancestors. Hence, when the population increased, resources formerly abundant barely sufficed for its needs, and in the course of centuries each one's share has come to be reduced to the barest minimum sufficient to keep body and soul together. Anyone who knows China wonders how the problem of food supply would be solved, if its many

scourges – civil wars, floods, epidemics – did not carry off millions of hungry mouths every year. Without these plagues, there would be abominable fratricidal struggles as to who should seize the bowl of rice or the wheat cake to appease his hunger. Is it not horrible to have to wonder which of these calamities is least murderous?

As the return from the soil diminished more and more the Chinaman endeavoured to increase at any cost the area of arable land, and the tree was therefore condemned: everywhere it was pitilessly attacked, and picturesque thicket and mighty forest disappeared from the face of the earth. The improvident peasant had soon to expiate his unfortunate miscalculation, and not possessing the energy to seek out new methods of culture more productive than his own, and being unable for want of scientific education to get food of a sort out of every kind of soil, he found himself, a century later, with the same area of cultivation as before the destruction of the unhappy trees. With the disappearance of these great protectors, the rich strata on tablelands and slopes of immense more or less undulating regions lost a great deal of their fertility, even when they did not become absolutely sterile: and the Chinaman found himself faced with the old problem. He has not solved it; partly because the most favoured provinces are unable, for want of easy means of communication, to send their superabundance to others.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The few railways have been recently constructed with European capital and technical skill.

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The great divisions of the empire, geographical and administrative, are so many self-contained regions living their own life, without continuous or well-sustained economic relations. There certainly exist fine waterways, not to mention their artificial connecting links, of which the Grand Canal is a striking example, but failure to promote the normal flow of the natural watercourses and neglect in the upkeep of the canals, whose construction formerly lost such enormous labour, have the effect of making transport very slow and very costly, even at the most favourable seasons of the year. It is all the slower and more expensive because the means of propulsion employed are most primitive. What is wanted is good substantial land roads, and if the Chinese would go in for breeding draught animals in those regions suited by nature to this branch of agriculture, rapid transport by means of large vehicles could be effected. In Manchuria and other Northern provinces an attempt in this direction has indeed been made; but no care has been taken to keep the roads in proper condition. Only when the soil is frozen hard by intense cold can the wagons pass along them; during six months of the year all traffic by road is interrupted. The few hundreds of miles of broad roads suitable for vehicular traffic constructed during the last five or six years have little practical value because they are unmetalled.

China, lacking then the necessary science and also possessing neither foresight nor the requisite energy, has failed in the task of providing the bare means of subsistence, to say nothing of wealth. At the present



day the terrible complaint of the unfortunate — '*chao tche, chao tchouan*,' — 'little to eat, little to wear,' — expresses the straitened circumstances, the general poverty of the mass of the people. The systematic abandonment of all stock-raising, except animals indispensable in farming, has deprived all China, save the Northern region, of a considerable amount of food, a loss not compensated for by the increase in arable land. And the calculation was all the more mistaken, at any rate as regards the Great West, as the preservation of the forest would at the same time have assured the enjoyment indefinitely of pasture land, and land to cultivate cereals other than rice, without mentioning all the resources obtained from forestry. And the valley bottoms could still have been utilized for rice-growing.

As he has not cattle, the Chinaman is deprived of this rich source of nourishment, which yields not only meat, but milk, and the butter and cheese extracted from it. He certainly has a cheese of his own, or what he calls cheese, from its appearance. But it is made of fermented bean flour (*seou fou*), and there is no milk in it. Rice, wheat and millet are the three principal foods of the Chinaman; the culture of vegetables is also highly developed. Unhappily, when there is either drought or flood, production is reduced, and in all the provinces this sad occurrence is very frequent, on account of the cutting down of the woods. The three principal cereals then increase in price, the first especially, and are no longer within the reach of the large class of artisans and porters of all kinds. Even

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granting easy means of communication, the inhabitant of Szechwan, for instance, could not get the rice he wants from the Eastern provinces; for burdened with the cost of carriage it would be too dear for him to buy. His purchasing power is extremely small: his industries are so primitive, he has so limited his production by the extreme of regulation, and by excessive reduction of the hours of labour – a reduction grateful to his love of ease – that these industries bring a ridiculously small profit to both master and man. The sub-soil is excessively rich in coal and minerals of all kinds, but he exploits them so badly and the transport is so onerous, that not only is he unable to export, but the price of both coal and metal is very high for internal trade.

Such is the situation of the inhabitant of Szechwan, who can however consider himself as the occupant of the most favoured province of the whole empire. Poverty, therefore, is great: the people are reduced to live on vegetables, happy if they can add to them a bowl of rice or a wheat cake. Among vegetables, the principal foods of the masses are gourds, cucumbers and pumpkins, largely cultivated throughout China, which fill the stomach, and cheat the hunger of millions of poor wretches. These pumpkins and gourds are not peeled before boiling; every bit of them is devoured. There are no peelings and parings in China, even in Szechwan, and though amongst the upper classes the servants cut away the outsides, the remains are not thrown to animals but to men.

Another variety of vegetable of which the consump-

tion is enormous in all classes is the *han tsai*, or dried vegetable of which I have made mention. More even than the gourd, it is the chief food of the poorer class, which eats it with its rice, when it can get any, but too often, alas! it forms the only nourishment of millions of Chinese. During the hot season, for this class of starveling, the *han tsai* is replaced by the *koua* (gourds and cucumbers). Thus in Szechwan, as I have said, a cabbage is cut into six or twelve slices, even sometimes more, to be sold in the street; a carrot, the long indigenous carrot, is cut into two and four pieces. I have seen miserable wretches, men and women, buying two pieces of carrot at a time, no more.

Rice is the food greatly preferred by the whole population, thus the very poor make an effort to get *mi tang* (rice water), that is to say, the water in which rice has been boiled, and they drink it with ardour, or mix it with their pittance of food. Leaves of certain trees, buds of plants and scrubs, grasses with nothing eatable about them, and which in any other country none would dream of utilizing, are plucked to make thin soup. There is no infected carrion which the Chinaman will hesitate to eat: old sows, nothing but skin and bone, dead of starvation, and dead dogs, are greedily picked up and devoured. When I was crossing the roads of Chengtufu with my little fox-terrier, who was in excellent condition, she was gazed at with such covetous looks that I was afraid of losing her, certain of the fate that awaited her. Every moment I heard '*fei te hen*' – 'she is very fat' – an expression which I did not like, as I knew its significance.

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In clothing, as in food, only the small minority in easy circumstances have plenty: the mass cannot afford to dress themselves in silken stuffs; cotton and linen serve for them. But none of these tissues can replace wool, so warm and useful. It is incomprehensible that the Chinaman has rejected this precious product, when he has in the North and the West flocks of sheep which could clothe a large part of the population.

This is yet another proof of the want of adaptation in the Chinaman, and his failure to profit by the resources of new surroundings: he seems entirely unable to free himself in any fashion from ancestral servitude; original conceptions, a new vision of things, seem forbidden to him.

In the course of this recital, I have mentioned that I have never seen so many rags as in China, and such rags! I shall not try to describe them. No bit of tinsel, no filthy scrap, but is utilized of necessity, alas! The surgical dressings, the cotton wool stained with serum, which had served to cover a sore, were in great demand by the unfortunates who came to consult me. At first we had great trouble to get them returned to be burnt; they wanted to keep them, the cotton wool especially, which would have been utilized in some way for winter clothing.

I have told also of the poverty of the Chinese in linen, even among the upper classes: it may almost be said that he possesses none. Our peasants are better dowered in this than any mandarin.

And the house: it is most frequently of thin planks or of mud wall, protecting neither from cold nor heat;

all the more dreary and gloomy by the light of a lantern of colza oil. The little oil lamp! The Chinaman has never advanced further from the method of lighting which his ancestors' ingenuity adopted centuries ago: nothing has changed since. But for some ten or fifteen years petrol has been introduced into China, and even electricity in certain towns.

The house is not further brightened by the cheerful wood fire of our humblest cottages, since it has no chimney, still less a stove. The bed of bricks heated from underneath, the *kong*, exists only in the North. The rich themselves suffer from the cold, under their cumbersome robes stuffed with wadding, and go to bed fully clothed. As for the poor, how they must shiver and shake with cold, their rags gaping with a hundred holes! In vain they draw their shreds of clothing round their bodies blue with cold; they never manage to protect themselves entirely – their wretched bodies, which the itch has not ceased to prey upon since they came into the world.

Even supposing the Chinese house were provided with a chimney, the mass of population could not be warmed, not only because they are so poor, but because the forests have been so completely cut down that wood has become exceedingly scarce. To cook the daily food, where there is no coal to be had, they make use of brambles, grass, dead leaves or the stalks of maize or sorghum, when the harvest is over. This combustible is so precious that the Chinese are accustomed to only half cook their food, collecting at the

end of the operation the most minute twig not entirely burnt. In this matter, there are miracles of foresight and astounding economy. Thus in order to reduce the expense of firing to a minimum, they manufacture stewpans and other kitchen utensils with an extremely thin broad bottom, so that the heat may be brought to bear more quickly, and more directly, on the food to be cooked.

It is easy to understand that a people whose economic organization is from some standpoints so mediocre should be forced to move in a circle of immediate necessities, from which there is no escaping. They can have no reserves, and must live from hand to mouth. In Szechwan, as in the rest of China, except the open ports, the little bank, the small shop, the petty commerce is the rule. There is so little money that a large number of partners is required in order to start the most trifling undertaking, requiring a capital of £400, for instance. For much less than that, to complete insignificant sums with the view of establishing a little village market, the co-operation of several individuals is necessary. It is said that the Chinaman has a mania for going into partnership; that is true, but the low level of his resources and his inertia make this obligatory.

When we now consider the position of the shopkeeper himself, we shall understand that his stock is confined to a very small limit; he cannot afford to have considerable reserves, and only orders according to his immediate requirements. Shops on the model not of the Louvre or the Bon Marché but more simply

on that of our large retail establishments do not even exist, except in the international towns. The tailor, the shoemaker, the hatter work to order, generally; ready-made clothes, shoes and hats are to be had only in very small quantity. If you want an article of a rather higher price – a pair of boots, for instance – the shoemaker will ask for your money in advance, not because he does not trust you, but in order to buy the leather he will require. If you refuse, you run the risk of never having any boots, unless you buy the common kind made for soldiers. I could multiply examples of this general shortage of spare cash.

To sum up, by faulty and especially by insufficient utilization of the immense resources both above and below the soil, the Chinaman exists only miserably, never sure of the morrow. Even his daily subsistence is at the mercy of a flood or a period of drought, calamities which he could frequently avoid or render less disastrous by looking ahead.

The Central Government, confronted with the people's want of foresight, did indeed establish reserve stores, intended to be filled in the years of abundance, but there are too many good reasons in China, apart from the constitutional repugnance to sustained effort, for such an institution to be efficacious.

## THE CHINESE CHARACTER

THE following reflections sum up and complete what I have already said on the subject of Chinese mentality.

Their aim is to try to describe the intellectual characteristics of the Chinaman, as they can be observed at the present time, but it is very clear to anyone who looks at the China of to-day that she must have been greatly different at a remote period — that her people once possessed energy and vitality which have now disappeared, and that the vastest of empires has come under the inexorable law of world evolution: like Nineveh and Babylon, Athens and Rome, it knew a radiant apotheosis, but to-day there is the sadness of decline.

Starting from the banks of the Hoang-ho and the Wei to extend his rule, the Chinaman little by little conquered by means of his ancient superiority the whole of the immense territory which constitutes the present empire. Then, being of opinion that his organization, political, social and economic, had reached its highest point, he began to moderate his efforts. What were the consequences? The first result, and for us the most astounding of all, was his crystallization in methods now thousands of years old, and often so primitive that constant change should have been the rule.

Some one day, in the course of the centuries, he must have conceived a type of house, a type of clothing, and a means of transport for land and water, and then formed the opinion that in each of these he had realized



perfection. Then, being satisfied that his choice of foods, his methods of cultivation, his agricultural implements, all answered to his present and future needs – that his industries with the plant and equipment at their disposal could not fail to meet all the demands of his social organization, he decreed, it seems, that he must now call a halt, and that any new effort towards imaginary perfection was useless. What would lead us to think that the Chinaman has been capable of thus enclosing himself, no longer to budge, in a circle of achievements of a material character (recognized as superior to those of the vanquished peoples surrounding him), is the fact that, once he had adopted the Confucian system of philosophy, he took no further trouble in the course of the centuries to verify its intrinsic value, but bowed to it in the most passive manner conceivable, without the slightest desire for further examination into its merits.

When, therefore, we look for the primal cause of the physical and intellectual stagnation and mummification of the empire, it appears to be nothing other than an insufficiency of brain-power in the Chinaman, with the defects which that entails – a feebleness of creative reaction, manifest even at the period of maturity, and growing gradually worse until it becomes absolute immobility in the period of decline.<sup>1</sup> The indications are numerous and striking: we have only to consider the real value of his advances in the economic sphere in order to estimate the extent of the acquisitions with which he is so proudly satisfied.

In agriculture I have just told how far he has ad-

<sup>1</sup> There is a second cause which is explained further on.

vanced; his is the patient and persistent work of a small labourer or market gardener, who manures and irrigates his field conscientiously, and makes great exertions to produce the maximum yield, but who has not come to understand the importance of adapting his methods to different soils, or the necessity of a variety of fertilizers as against the continuous employment of human manure. But the great error committed, author of so much poverty, was the wilful and pitiless destruction of the forests, with the object of increasing the area of arable land; in the periodic floods which followed, the standing crops were injured, even his cherished rice-fields themselves were reduced, by the deposit of sand and pebbles which covered their precious humus. The Chinaman also has no idea that trees are condensers of moisture, and that the destruction of the forests has deprived him of beneficial showers, so indispensable during the spring and summer months in a climate of tropical heat.

On his real territory, in the immense plains of the East, terrible necessity spurred the Chinaman to exertion; in order to defend his property and his harvest against the waters of great rivers which overflowed on both banks at certain seasons of the year, he heaped up earth, unwearyingly and unendingly, raising formidable dikes. But though he built them conscientiously, he was often negligent and failed to keep his fragile barriers always in repair; floods remained and will long remain one of the great calamities of the empire.

Though the dike was a simple means of defence in no way impressive, the same cannot be said of the

irrigation of vast districts where the agriculturist, in violation of nature, has turned the whole country into a rice-field; that is the Chinaman's great masterpiece. But was he happily inspired? In sacrificing the marvellous valleys, the fertile tablelands, to satisfy his ancestral taste, did he not tend to deprive himself of varied food supplies, better adapted than rice to the climatic conditions of the new countries he was then colonizing?

What an error he committed, moreover, when as against the enormous advantage in food supply which the breeding of stock affords, he set the extension of rice cultivation and nourishing vegetables, rendered possible only by the abolition of all pasture and of all forest. If the idea was mistaken, its execution was lamentable, in its heedless want of foresight, and the lack of any attempt to check results. The arable surface, as I have already explained, has been thereby diminished, and is diminishing year by year; the net yield, always a gamble, is almost entirely at the mercy of atmospheric caprice, to an extent unknown in our country. Thus Szechwan, where nature as it were has made every preparation for a marvellous and continuous prosperity, has experienced since 1900 two terrible famines, caused by drought or flood. Again, the cultivated area, suffering from overcropping, can no longer yield its normal return, and it is not such methods of fertilizing the soil which the Chinaman employs which will allow it to make good its exhaustion. And when the harvest promises well, and the cereal needs only to mature, by what madness does the Chinaman hasten

to reap it before it is ripe, thus entailing a serious loss in weight? In the same way, why does he always gather his fruit when it is green? It cannot always have been his method: at the present day, no doubt, necessity obliges him, his meagre reserves being prematurely exhausted before the harvest is due. And when the reaping is over, and he is in possession of his grain, does he plan out its consumption so as to be ready for the next season's harvest? If, moreover, there is an abundant year, does he think of putting by some provision for the future? Generally not, and yet for centuries misfortune has never ceased to warn him to be perpetually on the watch; he remains deaf to its warnings of calamity. Is not this behaviour heedlessness and improvidence carried to its extreme point? And if he has appreciated the imperative necessity of selection in seeds as in animals, why has he never applied the knowledge? Surely there is here a grave disregard of that law of self-defence which urges man to seek by every means the increase of his material resources.

To clothe himself, we have seen that the Chinaman has not turned to profit all his possessions; he has disdained, because he has not known its value, the woollen material from which man throughout the ages has drawn most comfort. And though our first impulse is to praise him for the changelessness of his fashion in dress, and admire the simplicity and sobriety of his habits in comparison with our extreme changeableness and frivolity, on reflection we are led to conclude that this simplicity is not a virtue, but rather comes from

cerebral inactivity and incapacity to invent; for change in our day is nearly always progress.

In the art of building, it has already been seen precisely how far the Chinaman has advanced, and with what kind of habitation he is content; it must be admitted that he has no proper understanding of hygiene, or of the most elementary standard of comfort, towards which mankind has been incessantly urged by the physical suffering entailed by extreme cold and extreme heat.

In his various industries, none have reached a high level, and some have remained in their primitive state, another evidence of his creative incapacity; his means of transport, for instance, have never gone beyond the junk, the wheelbarrow, and the very primitive cart. Of glass and soap he knew nothing until the advent of the European; he knows only a few metals, and only the simplest applied uses of them; he has never been able to extract anything from coal, which is to him mere fuel.

To sum up, the Chinaman has achieved little mastery over nature, and is completely unconscious that he is squandering enormous sources of wealth.

With regard to his scientific attainments, I have already pointed out that he does not even know what air and water are made of, and has never had a glimmering of the great physical and natural laws. His medical science is in its infancy, and surgery is not yet born. Are there not here proofs of a limited intelligence without breadth of vision and incapable of growth? So meagre indeed is the creative intelligence

of the Chinaman, that one is tempted to wonder whether, when he arrived from the West to colonize the valley of the Hoang-ho, he was not already equipped with a borrowed civilization. With this advantage he would have little trouble in dominating the indigenous inhabitants, who were very inferior even to himself (as I had the opportunity of remarking in Szechwan). Among these primitive races, divided into numerous clans, always at war with one another, the spirit of intrigue, so strong in the Chinaman, would find full play in keeping up their intestine warfare. By dividing, he ruled.

The Chinaman, I have said, is ignorant of science; has he penetrated as far as other races in philosophy and literature? If he is compared to his contemporaries of past ages, he is of course far behind the Greek genius. His poetry, of which he is so proud, is, with few exceptions, affected and artificial, without breadth or loftiness. There is no painting of natural beauty with a large brush, such as is inspired by the actual contemplation of nature. On the contrary he chooses for his inspiration the artificial background of a formally laid out garden, delighting in minute and detailed descriptive sketches.

In history he is nothing but a chronicler, but in philosophy he has surpassed himself, and if he has advanced less far in analysis and in observation than others have done, and has freely borrowed, still he possesses a code of morals very humane on certain sides.

Let us now examine what the Chinaman has achieved

in the social sphere, or rather let us draw conclusions from the preceding statements on the family, and the different classes which make up the nation.

As regards the family, only a people lacking in the critical spirit could have evolved such a monument of selfishness and tyranny. If the Chinaman had been endowed with some vigour of mind, with some kind of capacity for reaction, he would by now have gradually modified such a menace to individual liberty, giving to the family unit at once more elasticity and a more real cohesion, and choosing for its foundation not fear so much as affection. The subjection exacted from the son, imposing on him the duty of looking backwards for the inspiration of his present and future conduct to the behaviour and opinions of his father, must lead to apathy and stagnation. Are not all initiative, and effort towards better and more ideal conditions, thus killed in the germ? If the Chinese family indeed forms a remarkably solid entity, with what elements of weakness is it infected! Under European influence, reaction against parental rule has begun; unfortunately, young China is advancing much too fast.

The social grouping naturally follows the model of the family, and the hierarchy is based on the same principles. A powerful caste is formed which permits of no competitor, imposing its will on the mass as absolute dictator, and maintaining that rule thanks to qualities which seem to the European quite inadequate to justify such supremacy. The form even of this domination seems to us incompatible with the pros-

perity and well-being of a people. Is it not something to wonder at that there has never arisen a middle class? A middle class with an education other than the official erudition, or, if you will, made up of intelligent members of the lettered class, but who care for knowledge more than for power and honour — a middle class with sufficient organization to counterbalance the oligarchy of the mandarins? By studying the condition of the masses and the inadequacy of their powers of improvement, by creating an enlightened public opinion, by controlling and advising the governors of the provinces in the exercise of their authority, this class might have transformed Chinese society, might have galvanized it into life, might have impelled it towards progress. But, in the course of centuries, the elements capable of initiative and sustained endeavour have never made their appearance; the Chinaman evidently lacks the necessary intellectual energy. For when the consciousness of its natural rights awakes in a people of virile progressive capabilities, all the precepts and all the maxims, which prop up a supremacy based on the violation of liberty, rapidly become ineffectual. Having found no trace of such an awakening at any stage of Chinese history, one is forced to the conclusion that some physiological element is wanting in the Chinaman.

If now we examine the present condition of the Chinese mind, what do we see? The first and normal manifestation of a sound organ is its reactions to movement and activity: this is the necessary condition of regular functioning. It is desirable in the first place



to consider how far the Chinaman possesses the most important of all forms of activity – the creative faculty.

The answer can be given in a few words: he has created nothing for 2,000 years, and, more than that, he seems incapable of bringing any industry whatever to perfection. Of late years, when employed by Europeans to work their machines, it was found that he learned quickly how to manage them and how to profit by them, but he could never suggest any improvement to them; on the contrary, if he were not continually stirred up and watched by the European, he would soon diminish their working efficiency by neglect.

Do we find in the physical state of the Chinaman any evidences of lack of cerebral activity? Yes; the Chinaman will pass from waking to sleeping with extraordinary ease; as soon as he ceases active occupation, his organs enter into physiological repose – he falls asleep. You may note this anywhere in China; if, for instance, he has been walking along the road and steps into a sedan chair, slumber instantly overtakes him.

His senses have not the same acuteness as those of the European; his sight and his hearing have not the same fineness or rapidity of perception; his sense of smell is very imperfect; certain evil-smelling substances make hardly any impression on his olfactory organs. He will swallow the most horrible tasting medicines with extraordinary ease, and his sense of touch is inferior to ours: that is to say, he presents the phenomenon of attenuated sensation.

One can affirm as a general rule without fear of error that the functioning powers of the different

organs in the yellow man are inferior to those of the white. This commonplace is confirmed by physiological and pathological observation. I will cite only the fact that the blood circulates more slowly, and renders the organism less apt to defensive reactions.

This dullness of the senses, just referred to, points to physical decadence consequent on torpor of the nerves in a people unaccustomed to, if not incapable of, effort, whose benumbed brain is awakened only by violent sensations.

From the preceding it will be easily seen that the common manifestation of nervous activity called 'paying attention' will be markedly inferior to ours, under its two heads, intensity and duration. For instance, a Chinese steersman or engineer may have at any time moments of forgetfulness inconceivable to us — lapses which may have such serious consequences that constant supervision of him is necessary. The steamers of the Yang-Tse are obliged to have a larger personnel of white officers, because the Chinese crews must be incessantly supervised, for fear of disquieting lapses in difficult places. And yet the pilot knows the dangerous points in his river quite well; his memory is rarely at fault; the engineer knows all the secrets of his engine's working; but the one and the other may be betrayed at any moment by the weakness of their nerve power, and attention will have ceased to act. You notice the same defect in the artisan; the spinner is incapable of supplying you with a uniform thread, or the dyer of preparing two vats of equal concentration.

A striking example of the Chinaman's lack of con-

centration is shown too in his incapacity to bear in mind two contingencies at the same time. Passing through the streets of Chengtufu, on horseback or in a chair, I constantly noticed that the Chinaman when occupied in staring at the foreigner would let his child go under the horse's feet or get trampled on by the porters. If in crossing a road in Shanghai a Chinaman is struck in the chest by the shaft of a carriage, he will be greatly surprised, not realizing that though he had avoided a jinricksha or a bicycle he had not noticed the carriage. The power of attention in the European, which allows him by sight and hearing to follow the line of several vehicles at once when he leaves the pavement to cross a crowded thoroughfare, does not exist in the other race. If you give two or three orders at the same time to a servant — if you charge him to attend to more than one thing at the same place and at the same time — you will invariably repent it. Your cook in the exercise of his art shows himself most unequal and eccentric; rarely does he prepare any dish twice in the same way, not because he does not know the recipe, but because he is never able to fix his attention on it. If you are teaching one of the lettered caste, beware of counting on his capacity for mental strain; stop frequently, and change the subject from time to time, unless your lesson requires simply an effort of memory.

The Chinaman lacks judgment; he is wanting in general ideas; he does not know how to analyse, much less to synthesize; he has cultivated only his memory, not his reasoning faculties, and is therefore incapable

of following up an idea or a study, of systematizing, of disengaging the main thought. In ordinary life, when he is carrying out a building contract, for example, you perceive that he cannot make his ideas objective; he cannot translate his mental designs, group them, and represent them as a unit in a graphic form, as our architects do. He is so little accustomed to interrogate himself, to scrutinize, to grasp the details and the complexity of things, that nothing astonishes him; he confuses the most remarkable achievements of human genius with the modest triumphs of early times. All our science, and the admirable results which have been derived from it, remain unintelligible to the Chinaman. Electricity, steam, and their applied uses seem to him far removed from a triumph of the intellect, a work of the brain. It is chance that has favoured us, the dragon has been benevolent, it is a lucky find. He becomes incredulous when he is assured that the execution of such tasks involves the absolute necessity of book-learning.

A mandarin was one day shown a motor-boat. One counted upon signs of admiration after his examination of the machine. There was nothing of the kind. All that he found to say was that the boat was small, and that China possessed some much larger junks. Similarly, it seems astonishing to the Chinaman that a study of human anatomy should be regarded as indispensable to the understanding of diseases. He who has never paused over such details does not hesitate to place his medical art at the same level as ours; and even that is condescension on his part. Neverthe-

less, in these later years, he has begun the study of European medicine.

Not possessing general ideas or general information and little given to reasoning, he understands the significance of world-wide connections as little as that of machines. Thus is to be explained the systematic opposition which he has always offered to peaceful European penetration. Having no analytical faculty, the Chinaman cannot assemble and co-ordinate his perceptions. Great combinations are wholly foreign to his mind; in that immense empire political economy is unknown, and a national budget has never been framed.

We have noted the present condition of his various industrial undertakings: the moderate success with which he has developed them arises naturally from the same cause. This grave defect in the race is shown even in art, in which the Chinese have nevertheless distinguished themselves by so many beautiful examples. Art in the Chinaman appears to be almost wholly an instinct, where study and experiment have played a very small part, and to which scientific principles have contributed nothing. Moreover, the limitation of China's artistic production to certain fields, in which are not found the powerful harmonies of Greek genius, for example, where an orderly intelligence eager for truth was combined with natural inspiration, this limitation, I say, tends to give weight to this assertion.

If we reach these conclusions regarding the educated classes, what kind of reasoning is to be expected among the masses? Something has already been said on the subject, but nothing is more instructive than to observe

the servant class, a category which is nevertheless more gifted with intelligence than the majority of workers. You will notice that not only do they lack initiative, but that they take no account of circumstances in carrying out the orders they have received. For instance, your boy will have been told to open doors and windows when it is fine; if it comes on to rain he will never think of shutting them, or if he thinks of it he will hesitate, not being certain whether it is wise for him to interfere. In rainy weather he will spread out the carpets and mats to air just as in dry weather, unless he is stopped in time.

Is there any sign of a critical and analytical spirit among people who hamper their arms with immensely long sleeves, and mutilate their women's feet, thus diminishing their usefulness by destroying the equilibrium and the harmonious functioning of the body? Is there any indication of the critical faculty in a social organization which keeps individual units isolated, and does not aim at grouping the various elements and bringing about their solidarity? And what serious political consequences follow such a blunder! Absence of any link between the provinces except the administration; life everywhere individual and not national; the egotism which leads to weakness, never the altruism which gives strength. Is it again an outcome of the critical spirit which has organized a vast administrative system without foreseeing the necessity of financial provision to ensure the livelihood of its officials, from the high mandarin to the smallest clerk in the yamen? Has not this omission paved the way for the corrupt

practices with which China is riddled, and from which she suffers so terribly? Had it been otherwise, how much healthier would have been the state of the empire! Is it not surprising that for so many centuries this people has been inspired by the moral code drawn up by Confucius, without a thought of subjecting it to criticism, and separating the true from the false, the chaff from the good grain? Here again the Chinaman accepts all that his masters give him, and believes blindly in their teaching.

As foresight is nothing else than judgment and preparation against the unexpected which is always on the watch to surprise us, it is a branch of activity only to be met with in strong races, at an advanced stage in evolution. This effort and direction of thought towards the future appears in a remarkable degree in the European. Is it because he has suffered, and remembers the past, and regrets his old defeats in the struggle with nature and other enemies? Is it because he desires to avoid the weaknesses and errors of his forefathers, and to go on advancing always further? Doubtless; but how can it be explained that other races, who have suffered equally and are still suffering, seem to forget to look ahead, and to guard against threatening contingencies? The conquering monster, the exterminator of empires, is waiting ready to spring, he is scorching them with his hot breath, and yet they dare make no preparation to put themselves on guard, or if they bring themselves to attempt it their defensive action is so stamped with miserable weakness that it is rather an encouragement to attack.

## THE CHINESE CHARACTER

What about the Chinaman's physical activity? Is he a worker, as has been so often repeated? Those who have watched the coolie on the quays at Hong-Kong or Shanghai, the labourer in his rice-fields, or the craftsman in his shop, all cry, 'What a worker the Chinaman is!' But why does the breathless coolie, groaning his mournful 'han,' exert himself so violently in loading or unloading the holds of great steamers, carrying bales which seem overwhelming for his physique? Simply because competition is so fearful on the coast; for one coolie who falls exhausted, there are a hundred others to replace him. Poverty is such that work must be accepted whatever it offers, and even when it is out of proportion to his bodily capacity. Besides, you will never see him left to himself while he is working: he is sharply watched, for the bunkers of steamers must be emptied or filled rapidly, the motto of those who steer them across the oceans being, 'Time is money.'

Though the Chinaman in the ports appears to be a very active worker (under compulsion), he is very different left to himself in the vast interior of the country, wherever he can be observed. He cannot bear continuous work; he interrupts it by every possible means; rain, wind, rain especially, are constant pretexts to excuse a spell of rest. Rain is dreaded by the Chinaman to a point which would be unexampled cowardice among us. Thus Admiral Ting, at the time of the China-Japanese War, asked for a delay before he left his ship, because it was raining at the hour fixed for its surrender. One day, on my junk, I ordered a



soldier to fasten up a blind which a gust of wind had torn loose; coming out of his shelter armed with an umbrella because it was raining a little, he tried vainly with one hand to execute my order. I advised him, but in vain, to let go his umbrella, but he could not bring himself to that. In the end I rushed out of my cabin and fastened the blind myself. Many a time has a downfall of rain put an end to public risings! The most excited are instantly calmed.

I remarked just now that the Chinaman does not like continuous work; he prefers to interrupt it with periods of loafing, and with interminable gossip, and rarely deprives himself of them. Long ago the workman achieved not merely the eight-hour day but the six-hour day. At Chengtufu for months I had an opportunity of watching masons, carpenters, joiners and roofers. It was winter; they began work about nine o'clock – later, if the morning was dark; towards midday they ate, and at four o'clock they got ready to leave. At least every hour they took a little time for rest, to gossip and smoke their pipes, or go out into the street to drink a cup of tea. The quantity of work achieved in a given time is infinitely small compared to that of the white workman.

The artisan is so inactive and has so little conscientiousness that his work is often rough and rarely thorough. You should see how a plank is planed, or a piece of metal-work ground, or how a screw is driven in, or a bolt made, in the Shanghai dockyards, unless there is minute supervision. Fitters' work is generally defective. Yet the Chinaman has great natural dex-

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terity; when he takes pains he can get the best results, but his negligence and his inattention seem to be incurable.

You will find in the peasant the same slowness, the same unsteadiness in work. If, moreover, he had been endowed with real energy, would he not have made more progress, learned to adapt his soil to different crops? Would he not have secured a larger average production? Would he ever have died of starvation?

Hypnotized by the artistic creations of the Chinaman, the European has been eager to admire, and has often carried his investigations no further; he has forgotten that a natural gift such as art does not necessarily imply the existence among a people of those solid qualities which are the health and strength of nations.

Being lazy, the Chinaman soon came to aim at the suppression of all competition by carrying trades-unionism to an extreme, by limiting industrial production to strict necessity, and by insisting on manufacturing indefinitely the same models. If a craftsman or a manufacturer tries to free himself from the tyranny of the guilds, he is quickly reduced to impotence by their brutal intervention. What we call 'fashion' has thus never been able to establish itself in the old empire.

What better example can be given of the inclination of the Chinaman than to recall his repugnance to all physical exercise, save in recent years under our influence. The leisured European shoots, fishes, works in his garden, endeavours in some way or other

to gratify his imperative need of exercise. The Chinaman will spend his leisure lying or squatting indoors; he will never go out to stretch his legs. Nothing astonishes him so much as our activity. Should you invite a young mandarin to imitate you—to ride on horseback, for instance—after a trial he will confess that he does not understand either the pleasure or the use of such exercise. If you trot instead of ambling as he does, he will think you ridiculous. The rich man never thinks of travelling; the poor man only leaves his country to find a less meagre pittance elsewhere.

This inertia is still more striking in the child; he does not play, he looks like a rigid little Buddha; he rarely runs or jumps. During years passed in Szechwan I never once saw a child climb a tree to get a bird's nest. As for fights and tussles, so frequent with our boys, they are one of the rarest sights in the empire. Yes, the Chinese child in no way resembles that active imp, the European child. The intense need of movement, even the cruelty shown by the European child, which is only an excess of his passion for domineering, of his irresistible ardour for possession, all these qualities and defects do not belong to the Chinese child. When the scion of the white race grows up, the unknown and the unconquered appeal to him; he will rush to the conquest of the world, of the elements; he will explore the bottom of the seas, or the mysterious vault of the skies; he will labour on the ice at the Poles, or under the burning sun of the tropics. The fever of work, of discovery, of the greater extension of his field of action, torments and urges him on unceas-

ingly. He is indeed the conqueror, the being admirably organized for final triumph in all struggle with other races. He truly dominates the evolution of the present world, guides it at his will. The activity which consumes him, the strength of his will, his capacity for sustained effort, cannot but carry him into the thick of the fight unceasingly, where everything must yield under his grasp, a living and active expression of his marvellous constitution. See also what he has done to develop to the utmost his physical strength and his intellectual vigour. Does he not in a thousand ways keep up the play of his muscles? And by the organization of his schools, his libraries, his museums, his laboratories, by the extraordinary competition which he provokes among the different ethnic groups of his race, does he not every day increase his brain power?

Do not imagine that the Chinaman has this agitated brain, even in labour. No; the manifestations of his activity are more modest. He has systematically neglected the exercise of his muscles, learnt by heart the poems and philosophic maxims of his great ancestors, spent a whole life in tracing the characters of his script, but has created nothing of any importance, beyond a few poems or an obscure novel. At no moment did he experience that thirst for learning, for seeing new worlds, for examining the visible and the invisible, which incessantly torments the European. At no time, for example, has his energy taken him across the oceans, except on courses already charted. Never has he rounded Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope; that was too much for him.

Fully satisfied with the achievements of his ancestors, who in his opinion had accomplished everything, leaving no more scope for new discoveries or new productions, he lived upon the past, indifferent to the future, because his neurasthenic intelligence dreaded effort, of which for centuries it has lost the habit. And for his culture he had no need of the museums and libraries of a despised race, no need of its laboratories. What was the use of them? Was there any science equal to his own?

The state of his mind cannot be better symbolized than by that of an old man whose intellect is fading away, amid the pleasures of recollection, with his favourite books around him, the pages of which he has turned almost every day of his long career. He does not want to hear of the sayings and doings of the young, or, if he listens to their talk, it is only to blame their imprudence, their foolish recklessness. Any exertion has become intolerable to him; he has finished with struggles. Let him not be disturbed in the serene enjoyment of a well-earned repose! Happily, change is taking place among the young, but more destructive than constructive.

Many will remark: 'But the Chinaman is extremely curious, he wants to know everything.' Yes, but it is the curiosity of the woman or the child which fastens on trifles – not scientific curiosity, seeking after new stimulus, new suggestions, new ideas.

The Chinaman betrays his repugnance to effort by a phrase constantly on his lips, 'man, man – slowly, slowly,' which is frequently translated into act by 'do

the least possible.' And to excuse the consequences of putting into action such a maxim, he has another expression always ready, '*tcha pou to*' – 'it's not far out': if it is not perfection, it is near enough. This is what any workman will say to you when he has made a hopeless mess of a piece of work entrusted to him. The torpor of his intellect has led him in the same way to a general lack of precision: time does not exist for him; to-morrow is as often the day after to-morrow or later still. And if there is one thing that one can never trust to a Chinaman, it is the reading of a scientific instrument, a recording apparatus. He cannot grasp the necessity of unwavering attention, strict ascertainment, mathematical exactitude.

The Chinaman attaches so little importance to the natural means of exercising his activity that he regards the loss of a limb or even of his sight with an indifference that amazes the European in Asia. He does not worry about his sores or his rheumatism as being injuries which may reduce the functioning activity of his organs; on the day when disease has robbed him of strength, he will simply become a beggar.

There is one quality which has been greatly admired in the Chinaman; I mean his patience. It is truly without limit, but it has too great a resemblance to inertia to be considered as a great title to glory. His natural passivity is so great, his slowness to reaction so marked, that his patience is not a virtue in the same degree as in the active being, who hates losing time which could be better employed.

Very often, when the Chinaman postpones the

moment for action to obtain, apparently, a more complete result, it is only, at bottom, a manifestation of his habitual apathy, and his repugnance to prompt solutions, which will demand sustained effort and unflinching will. When, therefore, Chinese procrastination is attributed to calculation, that is a great mistake; even when there is calculation, it is usually mingled with the hereditary tendency of the race.

In considering what China formerly was and what she is at the present day, in considering the astounding pride which she displays in the most primitive achievements, it seems, as a secondary cause, that her failure – her mummification – cannot otherwise be explained save in the following fashion: her statesmen, her philosophers, her *literati*, must have exclaimed one day: 'We have reached, at the present time, the highest civilization, we dominate the known world, we have completed the greatest work ever conceived of. Enough of war and struggle, let us now rest in peace and enjoy all the wealth accumulated in this greatest of empires. No more fighting without or within, no more competition, not even in industry and commerce, no more taxes: happiness smiling on all and for ever, in one great family.'

China would then have desired to realize the unrealizable. The consequences of such a decision, of such a violation of the law of nature, could not be otherwise than those observed so far in the course of this study of the general situation of the Empire.

'No more fighting,' said the philosophers and the *literati*; 'all the barbarians are pacified, and bow before

our intellectual supremacy. No more soldiers, these creatures who are the symbol of ignorance and brutality.' And the profession of arms was pronounced contemptible, unworthy of an honest man.<sup>1</sup> The Romans had said *cedant arma togae*; the Chinaman went further, he declared that it was necessary to banish the means of making war by suppressing all physical energy, or at least branding it with contempt. The expression '*siao jen k'i ta*' – 'it is the nobody who has great muscular strength' – served to stigmatize bodily vigour, and debility was raised to honour, being supposed to be the necessary accompaniment of vigorous brain. Exertion, exercise, were forbidden, except to the *vul-gum pecus*, whose business was to feed and clothe this aristocracy which was still material enough to be subject to corporeal necessities. And to show that his fingers could never be set to the execution of any menial task, the lettered man allowed his nails to grow to an inordinate length; this ugly thing was the symbol to him of poetic inspiration, the genius of literature and of all the virtues.

These philosophers and guides shut their eyes to the fact that man lives amidst eternal combat, that no people can escape this natural law; that if he does not remain strong, and scorns to be drawn into the struggle, he is condemned to physical and moral bankruptcy, then to slavery and to submission to other more combative nations. The old Chinese Empire has escaped this fate only by its isolation, and the mutual jealousies of the European nations.

<sup>1</sup> *Leangtze chang ti pou che te hao jen.*



Punishment has none the less followed close on the fault committed.

Look around and see how lamentable has been the failure of the Chinese ideal: production reduced in every branch of cultivation, industry and commerce; famines, civil wars, insecurity of property and life. No real means of communication or of transport, and a third of the adult population converted into beasts of burden. As he has grown weaker, the Chinaman has protected himself by forming most tyrannous trades unions and associations; his individuality has disappeared, and with it all initiative and creative vigour. His natural affections have become changed; his selfishness, already great and strengthened by the special form given to the institution of the family, has taken on proportions astounding to our race. He was told that there must be no more struggle, no more effort; then the human beast revealed itself in its entirety. Heeding nothing but his instinct of self-preservation and his personal enjoyment, he has proclaimed aloud his self-concentrated love, leaving to die on the road his impoverished brother who sinks exhausted, and abandoning to the caprice of flood and to the fury of fire his other brother, without for a moment thinking of spending a little of his energy in preserving for them what he himself prizes so highly.<sup>1</sup>

The dislike of exertion has bred cowardice and want of discipline. The Chinaman, in ceasing to cultivate

<sup>1</sup> Allusion to the absolute lack of solidarity existing in China, of which I have already spoken.

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masculine virtues, becomes neurasthenic in physique as in character, and is no longer able to display that manifestation of energy which we call courage. Thus we have the peasant abandoning his house to the thief, instead of defending his property; the rich man allowing himself to be robbed in a thousand ways, buying the favour of bandits, submitting to all sorts of administrative tyrannies; we have the absence of all mutual help, which is the supreme cowardice. People have tried to excuse this disregard of the laws of humanity by saying that it is for fear of judicial complications or from religious fanaticism that the Chinaman acts thus. But what sort of a nation is it where the individual is afraid of carrying out the most sacred of duties, where a generous action can be wrongly interpreted or even punished? What can we call this religious fanaticism, this fear of going to meet destiny, of violating the laws of the gods? What can we think of the priest or the governor of such a country, where so fatal an error is not condemned? There is, however, an explanation of such conduct, as we shall presently see.

Since inflexible moral discipline can belong only to strong races, who are capable of real self-mastery and of imposing upon themselves duties repugnant to man's natural tendencies, it has not been able to maintain itself in the old empire, and obedience to force alone has become the rule. How many times have I seen among adult men the most reasonable order violated, and the caprice of a moment taken as a serious motive which should determine this or that action. You will say that in our countries this also

occurs, but it happens much less frequently, and what contempt does the Chinaman show for the opinion of a superior whose rightness of judgment could not be compared with his miserable little dwarf of an ideal! But in the empire the most insignificant of coolies claims to be in every respect as good a judge as his mandarin.

Little by little, drawn in spite of himself upon a dangerous inclined plane, the Chinaman has come, as a result of one fall after another, to have no longer any ideal, or any noble aspiration towards a better state. He has returned to the instincts of the first ages; eating has become the greatest and most important act in his day. In greeting you, he says, '*Fa tsai kia houai*,' that is to say, 'May you grow rich, and may your belly increase.' If you are his guest, after the meal he will question you with '*Tche te pao mo?*' — 'Have you eaten till you are swollen?' This is what he has come to.

When I consider that the Chinaman has been declared again and again *ad nauseam* to be temperate, it is clear he can have been thus described only by persons who have never seen him. Gluttony is the rule for him, whenever he has means to satisfy his appetite. He eats to the point of indigestion, sickness, and chronic dilatation of the stomach. If he generally appears temperate, it is from absolute necessity, because he is poor, and his resources have a limited maximum, as he never exercises forethought, or endeavours to put his exertions to a better use. But if fortune should turn him from a little artisan to a wealthy man, on

that very day he will be anything but temperate. Observe the coolie who has for the moment a little money at his disposal; he does not fail to enjoy it immediately without care for the future. He goes to gorge himself on fat and rice to congestion point.

Nothing is more common in China than to repair an injury done to some one by paying him with a dinner: many quarrels are ended thus, with the prospect of gastronomic satisfaction.

The capacity of the Chinese stomach is astounding. I have seen my porters taking a meal at eight o'clock in the morning, and another at nine o'clock, and if I was watching I soon caught them eating again at the next inn we met. Their pay was good; they profited by stuffing themselves with all kinds of victuals from morning till night.

The Chinaman greatly admires a big eater, and when he boasts of his domestic animals — his dog, for instance — he will not say that it is a good dog, but that it is *houi tche*, that is to say, a good trencherman. This expression is chiefly applied to his favourite animal the pig, the dog being never the object of the same attention.

It is only in the old empire that a being is to be found who is capable of giving his life for a sum of money which will enable him during one month or even less to feast at his heart's content. This kind of transaction is quite often seen in the case of a rich man condemned to capital punishment, but anxious to find a substitute. He therefore buys a beggar, and for about 150 or 200 francs the beggar will die in his place.

The concern about eating pursues the Chinaman even to his tomb; thus one of the first duties of filial piety consists in carrying victuals at fixed periods to the ancestor's place of rest.

What now are we to think of all the accusations brought against the Chinaman by the European, and of the grave faults with which he is charged? The Chinaman is said to be disloyal, a liar, his bad faith is flagrantly seen everywhere. Is this really true? On the contrary, the Chinaman has always seemed to me to show respect for agreements and bargains, when once he has entered into them. Though he cavils, shuffles, seeks evasion as long as the negotiations are taking place, though he does not express his intentions clearly at first, though he irritates us with his loopholes for escape, we ought not to forget that our own conduct has led him to exaggerate certain bad habits which belong to all races. In his political relations, there is nothing astonishing in seeing him use the weapons of the weak, duplicity and falsehood; or see him seek in procrastinations and ambiguous answers an efficacious means of defence.

When you decide to ask from the Chinaman nothing but economic concessions in which his interests will be safeguarded, his conduct and his method change completely, and you will never have to regret having co-operated with him. All Europeans who have commercial relations with Chinese will tell you with what loyalty and scrupulous honesty they fulfil all their engagements. If Europeans have also made contracts with the administrative authorities, at no time will the

latter try to keep them strictly to the letter of the clauses which bind them.<sup>1</sup>

It is indeed for other reasons that we think we have a right to judge the Chinaman severely: for his egoism, the cruelty resulting from it, his corruption, and his conceit.

His egoism is indeed profound, and incomprehensible to us. But remember the many ways in which the Chinaman has suffered and still suffers: flood, famine, epidemics, which he knows neither how to prevent nor how to fight; civil wars, chronic brigandage, general insecurity of life and property. Exposed to every surprise, never sure of the morrow, hardened to the sight of terrible hecatombs by flood and famine, existence no longer appears to him, as to us, the supreme good not to be parted with. His ration of food is so moderate that he has come to think that the number of those sitting at table is always too large. The unhappy man has also found out that the economic equilibrium of his empire cannot be maintained if Death reaps less liberally among the masses. His indifference to the worst misfortunes has therefore gradually increased, until it has become contempt for his own life and that of others. It is poverty, the agonizing certainty that he cannot be sure of the morrow, which has made him selfish and cruel. Let us pity him, and not be too much in a hurry to condemn him.

I have told of the tyranny which the institution of the family permits to him, but he rarely abuses his power,

<sup>1</sup> Formerly this was always true. But why must these praiseworthy customs be dying out to-day?

except in certain behaviour towards his womenkind, a behaviour which he considers correct.

Whenever a writer has commented on the egoism of the Chinaman, his contempt for the lives of others, and his severity towards the weaker sex, he has been careful to establish a parallel with the kindness of his behaviour to animals. The contrast is indeed striking. The Chinaman is full of consideration for his cat, his pig, and other interesting animals: he never treats his horse roughly, nor so far forgets himself as to kick his dog – as we are apt to do – an animal which nevertheless he does not love. This behaviour is incomprehensible to us until we reflect that domestic animals never enter into competition with man in the struggle for life.

A further charge against the Chinaman is the intensity of his hatreds and his love of vengeance. This fault is connected with the same kind of feeling of which we have just spoken, the vagaries of a conscience which suffering has put out of tune. His mode of vengeance is sometimes very strange, and the intensity of his hatred goes to the extreme of sacrificing his own life in order fully to attain his end.

The young wife hangs herself, in order to put the justice of the mandarin in motion, and ruin her adoptive family, and thus avenge herself for all the cruel treatment she has endured. The man to whom you have done some injury consigns you to the magistrate by coming and hanging himself at your gate, thus making sure of his vengeance. Another will come and die in your field, or will bring there some beggar's corpse, with the conviction that the myrmidons of the yamen

will repay you a hundredfold the wrong you have done to him. He knows his people, and is confident that he can thus glut his spite better than if he stabbed you with a knife.

As for the accusation of corruption brought against the Chinese administration, it is no doubt true; but if one reflects that the Chinese official is paid a ridiculous wage insufficient to keep him from dying of hunger, one will be less eager to condemn what is called his chronic venality. This national blunder, refusing to recognize financial needs, is derived doubtless from the conception of the family; the mandarin, being the father of the people, must not be openly paid a wage by his children, but should rather receive voluntary contributions inspired by filial piety.

On the day when China admits her mistake, and establishes a budget on the European model, corruption will gradually disappear, venality ceasing to be a vital necessity.

Administrative corruption has brought into being a curious mode of defence. In order to enjoy comparative tranquillity, rich or well-to-do people are accustomed to ensure themselves against surprises by paying an annual subscription 'for peace' to the officials of the law courts. The amount of the subscription naturally varies according to the wealth of the subscribers.

There are a number of by-words or sayings to characterize the rapacity of the law officials: (1) 'It does not matter whether you are right or not; if you have no money, you are wrong.' (2) 'The sight of money to a law-officer is like the sight of blood to a fly.' And the



official sums up his hopes in the saying, 'There is no dog so thin that you cannot scrape a little fat off him.'

I have yet to speak of Chinese conceit; it is immeasurable. His empire represents the only civilization in the world, it alone is glorious. We are still to-day to the Chinaman, *tsao fan*, barbarians in revolt against the Son of Heaven – craftsmen who can make rifles, cannon and other machines; we are still always in their eyes poor, ignorant, pretentious wretches, incapable of understanding and cultivating literature. Though in the ports or amongst a few mandarins who have been to Europe or the United States, you may meet disillusioned Chinamen, with their minds opened to less mistaken views about us, the opinion which I have just expressed is exactly the idea which is held regarding us throughout the Celestial Empire.

China doubtless has a right to the admiration of other nations for the great work which she achieved in building up and preserving, through so many centuries, the vastest kingdom known. She also deserves our praise for some of her literary and philosophic productions, not forgetting her fine moral code; in art she has realized marvels, before which the known world bows, in spite of the frequent lack of originality. Therefore her part in the development and enfranchisement of mankind from primitive darkness is manifestly important, and deserves full recognition. But it is difficult for the European to subscribe wholly to the pretensions of the Chinaman, so little justified as they often are. I have told what he thinks of our knowledge generally, and of the multifarious creations of European genius, affecting

to place them on a level with his most primitive inventions. Just as the mandarin saw only a difference in size between a steam-launch and a junk, so the wheelbarrow coolie will carefully refrain from enthusiasm at the sight of a locomotive: it is certainly bigger than his wheelbarrow, and can drag other carriages; it is made of iron instead of wood; its wheels are larger; but he sees nothing more in it. How the enormous difficulty of disciplining steam had been overcome is naturally incomprehensible to his intelligence, and even to that of the mandarin, so long as he is ignorant of physical science. In short, our superiority in the means of transport will be summed up as the employment of larger carriages than those of the Chinaman: as for him, he can get the same result by employing a larger number of wheelbarrows and porters. The mechanical crane, raising thousands of tons of rice in a few hours, provokes the remark that he can do the same by setting to work the required number of coolies.

The question of the time ratio of a given piece of work is still for him a negligible matter. Though the business man of Canton or Shanghai has changed his opinion on this subject, he is an infinitely small number: nevertheless, his new way of thinking has passed the limits of these towns, and is gaining the interior little by little, particularly along the great waterways. But elsewhere, it is quite otherwise.

When, living in China, you entrust to your servants some improved implement to make their work easier, — an implement which they quickly learn how to use, — you may be certain that they will not avail themselves

of it unless you are there to watch them; they will go on working with their primitive tool.

Yes, the Chinaman denies the possibility of our having found out anything better than he: his vast intelligence has embraced everything, and the brilliant inventions of which we are so proud either have no value in his eyes, or are pirated from the creations of his ancestors. Yes, his conceit is immeasurable! And the most wretched of coolies or beggars, pulling his indescribable rags and tatters round his itch-tortured body, will cry his *ngo han tze* with the same pride as the Roman, who, draping himself in his toga, flung his vaunt of *civis romanus sum* to the echoes of the world.

The Chinaman then holds his head very high; and, having regard to the value of his achievements, his condescension is without limit. But is that to say that he will indefinitely remain incapable of comprehending the achievements of others, that he will systematically shut his ears to all our counsels, and close his eyes to the eloquent object-lessons which he is receiving? No; for though he does not grasp, as I have thus explained, the full bearing of our scientific study and the full usefulness of our inventions, together with their social consequences, nevertheless in some parts of the empire he is beginning to awake to realities and to recognize certain new conditions in human existence; since the last great political events, he has really begun to shake off his torpor.

At Szechwan, where the population is of gentler character, and less systematically opposed to the foreigner, some of our more practical inventions are

receiving a warm welcome by the people. And our ideas will little by little, particularly by means of the schools, penetrate, if not to the masses, at any rate to the more intelligent of the young people. But it must not be forgotten that the Chinese are an old nation, who have no longer any ideal or thought of the future, whose desire is for repose, whose whole existence for centuries has been nothing but a meditation on death. In the midst of the ruins which they have allowed to accumulate, their attention fixed on the tomb, they regard the coffin as the most precious gift, the most delicate attention, to offer to a parent. But how can the Chinaman be roused, and snatched from his thousand-year lethargy? We must come in touch with him, and try to understand him, and then teach him our sciences gradually, with the precautions necessitated by his old ideas and his hereditary tendencies, so alien to the new ideas with which we desire to impregnate him. And while instructing him, we must take special pains to prove to him by examples and practical applications, that he has nothing to lose but everything to gain, on the contrary, by listening to us. Once you have overcome his conceited scepticism, he will have confidence in you, and thereafter follow you blindly.

His intelligence, always quick and capable of certain effort, prepares him quite naturally, better than other peoples, to receive the good seed, and cause it to fructify. If, fatigued with so long an existence, he is condemned to a lack of creative impulse, what does that matter? A younger race has lifted humanity out of the rut where it had been so long enmeshed; she is flying

with outstretched wings towards the most astounding, the most unsuspected triumphs. Having made straight the ways, prepared the fruitful ground, with all the means of execution, the other races have only to listen to her invitation, and follow her example: success is certain. And the Chinaman is, amongst these nations, the one who can most profit from the lessons learned. Who knows if he will not find in the science of the barbarians across the ocean the water of life, which, issuing from the fountain of Youth, may bring him a rejuvenation? In making him conscious of his faults and errors, as we have been doing in his own interest, not for the pleasure of criticism, in aiding him with our counsel, and our instruction, we are leading him towards the realization of this beautiful dream. But if we cannot reach this height, it will always be easy for us, by making known to the Chinaman the rational way of making the most of the wealth in his country, to bring a little joy and happiness to his empire, where so much poverty and suffering are openly displayed.

This study would be incomplete if I said nothing about the religious standpoint of the Chinaman. It is that of an old man, whose observation of life around him has convinced him of its nothingness, and destroyed his faith in what others call the immortal beliefs of all humanity. Yes, he believes no longer in the gods: after having invoked them so long in vain, he has lost faith in them. He has found them too capricious, too changeable, chastising at random, possessing less sense of justice than himself. He is thus freed from the tyranny of his gods, and has even been bold enough

to reduce them to the same level as simple human beings, whom they so much resemble. Having catalogued them, and arranged them in their proper grades, he signified to them that if they played fair with him, certain favours would be afforded them; give and take. And now, when he is satisfied with their intervention, he rewards them by elevating them in rank; but he knows also how to punish them by lowering their place on the hierarchic chart the number of grades in proportion to the extent of the fault they have committed. He chastises them even more smartly when they have abused his patience, have continued deaf to his prayers, in time of drought, for instance. If the rain delays too long, the son of Han burns no more incense, but, seeing red, in the face of such ingratitude, he whips the god responsible, and—oh, shame for this poor god!—it is sometimes even a woman who applies the correction; sometimes they go so far as to throw the god into the river.

All this will appear very strange to European believers; it is, however, the truth. The Chinaman is the most sceptical of sceptics, and no one knows better than he how to fit his god to the necessities of his social and economic life. After having for long held his gods in terrible fear, he became gradually reassured by remarking how many celestial favours were bestowed on the wicked, and on the tyrannical mandarin. Then one day he conceded to his gods only a vague supremacy, whose extent would vary with the value of the protection they afforded; this was the point of departure for the creation of the hierarchy of which I have just spoken. Consequently the degree of power

assigned to these gods reacted to the vicissitudes of the Chinaman's economic or political life. If there came about a decline in the prosperity of a town at any given time, the protecting divinity was speedily declared to be incapable and below the level of his task, and thrown aside to be replaced by another; if the Imperial troops launched against the Western barbarians underwent cruel defeats, instantly the god of war, who had been relegated to the lowest rung of the hierarchy, was put up many degrees, and recovered a lustre of which he had long been deprived.<sup>1</sup> I should not be at all surprised if recent political events have not given a new and considerable leap-up to this god, placing him perhaps in the same rank as the god of letters.

In certain desperate situations, when the Chinaman feels himself totally abandoned by the celestial powers, he thinks out strange combinations to get rid of his bad fortune, the scourge which is mercilessly pursuing him. Thus two years ago, in a certain central province, a terrible cholera epidemic was ravaging a district. All the joss-sticks burned, all the crackers pulled, all the dragons promenaded through the streets of the capital in solemn procession having done nothing for the cessation of the scourge, the mandarin authorities and the notabilities met together and after consultation declared that the year (it was in March) had begun badly, that it would be ill-omened according to all prevision during its twelve moons, and that only one means offered for escape from the present calamity and future calamities,

<sup>1</sup> In this case it is the long-neglected god whom, under the pressure of unsuspected distress, they put up again to invoke.

and that was to begin the year again. And the festivities of a fresh New Year's Day were decreed: the series of customary celebrations was set in full swing, and as the epidemic, which had already long been raging, was at the period of decline, its fairly rapid disappearance, starting about the time when the authorities put their discovery into practice, was hailed as the result of this luminous idea. How these poor protecting deities were mocked at, and how inferior were their intelligence and sagacity to that of men!

The Chinaman, except in crises like these, lives none the less on good terms with the deity. He is a wise man who repeats often enough a prudent 'Who knows?' Therefore he continues to burn incense to his god, to implore his aid, holding himself free to take vengeance on the god for his failures and misfortunes. But where the old sceptic never fails to betray himself, is when praying as a suppliant, bringing his tribute and his offerings, he has the audacity to fool the god of his preference shamelessly, by making him whistle for his money, to use a vulgar phrase, — that is to say, by paying him with sham bars of gold and silver, made out of cheap coloured paper, yellow or white.

Is this sceptical Chinaman superstitious? Yes, extremely so, though the two terms seem to contradict each other. The reason is that, being quite ignorant of science, he has never been able to shake himself free from the whole train of queer explanations of natural phenomena, bequeathed him by his ancestors; and the mandarin, as much as the peasant and coolie, is a prey to the same terror of the mysterious unknown. The



ancestral cult, the fear of displeasing the *sienjen* (forefathers), who make your misfortune or your prosperity, has contributed powerfully to develop this old leaven of superstition, common to all humanity. Thus, the corpse is the object of a thousand attentions, and some of its aspects are very much feared, when, for example, there is the phenomenon of *pou cheou che*, that is to say, when the body remains flexible after death, and does not assume the normal rigidity. That is a very bad omen; the dead demands companions in his tomb; therefore incessant prayers then begin and continue. A most trifling occurrence, a pure chance, may have immediate terrible consequences. Suppose a cat were to walk across the corpse, and startle it, as the Chinese say; the shock to the soul of the deceased will be so great, he will feel such resentment that a like profanation could have been allowed, that he will return to earth to revenge himself on one of the family, he will return to kill, *houi cha* (*houi*, return; *cha*, kill).

For fear of displeasing the dead, the corpse is kept in the house for an indefinite time, and the diviner is paid a large sum to find him a good place of interment, a corner of the *long hsié*, — the cave which is the dwelling-place of the Dragon.

If any misfortune falls upon the family after a first burial, the survivors have no doubt that they have made an error in the choice of the burial-place, and that the only chance of seeing better days is to transport elsewhere the remains of the dead!

Superstition also enters into the various acts of ordinary life, and more than that it bears a part in

official customs. A journey is not undertaken, a business transaction arranged, a daughter married, without the intervention of a thousand strange influences. For success in any enterprise whatever the Chinese are much more concerned with finding the vein of the Dragon, the *long me*, than with the special qualifications of the experts. If a mine, for instance, is in question, it is not the experience of the geologist which matters (the Chinaman knows nothing of geology), nor that of people with a practical knowledge of this kind of work, but the caprice of the sorcerer who is discovering the dwelling-place of this Dragon. And if a seam gives out, it is because the god has moved house, and gone elsewhere. The *long me* can also pass over your field or over the boundary into your neighbour's field; in that case there will be quarrels, endless lawsuits to determine who has a positive right to the precious vein, source of all good fortune and all success.

The cultivated class does not escape this curious servitude: thus the high mandarin, who is going to take charge of a prefecture or province, will not enter on his official duties except on a lucky day, like the Romans: he will never receive the seals on a day of ill omen: misfortune would not fail to fall on him during the entire duration of his official term. The magistrate sits only at auspicious times.

Not only are there days which are gravely prejudicial, but also certain objects and words; it is usual in China to abstain from pronouncing words supposed to be unlucky.

On the other hand, the Chinese employ all kinds of

methods to invoke good fortune; they write on their doors, for instance, '*kai men ta ki*,' – 'when the door is opened, happiness is found.' I should never be done if I enumerated all the puerilities, in constant use, invented so as to enjoy the whole series of earthly delights.

The Chinese almost always attach a superstitious significance to the most common and easily explained phenomena or accident. I will take as example one of the misfortunes the Chinaman feels very deeply, – the death of his silkworms. They die because he is very negligent and knows nothing of their laws of health, and is incapable of dealing with the epidemics which attack them. But that is not his opinion: they die because someone is dead in the house or near by, – because they have smelt a fishy smell, – because a visitor who has just seen a serpent or a human corpse has looked at them. Everything that recalls death has a disastrous influence on silkworms; therefore the Chinaman during the period of their growth abstains from praying for his ancestors or being present at a funeral.

I will not further insist on these examples of Chinese superstition, general in all classes of society and not confined, as with us, to certain classes of the population, who are still ignorant, but who are daily freeing themselves more and more from strange practices of this sort. In the Celestial Empire these practices will endure as long as the present system of instruction and upbringing persists: doubtless for a long time yet, especially among the masses, so tenacious is the chain which binds a people, particularly a people like the Chinese, to its ancestral conceptions.

I pause: happy if I have been able to give a glimpse of the real causes of the weakness of the Great Empire, and the reasons for her stagnation. As to her prospects of rejuvenation, I have just said what they are, and by what means they can be realized. Above all, let us not forget this, — of vital importance for us, and a possible guarantee for the future: by the Chinaman nothing is held in more respect than knowledge; it is his real religion, next to the worship rendered to his ancestors. Therefore the master, the teacher, represents in Chinese society the greatest and least disputed moral authority. And this authority, with its vastly extended influence, will be all the more fruitful when the professor addresses himself to the ruling class of the lettered, the one class which enjoys power and respect in the empire. It is therefore a matter of great importance that the white race alone should give scientific education to the Chinaman, regaining by a great civilizing achievement the military prestige which it has recently lost. And the moment for action has come: recent events have proved to a large number of mandarins, placed in conditions favourable to observation, the absolute necessity of becoming acquainted with our science, and of cultivating other studies than letters and philosophy. But what must be prevented at any cost is that a people having any interest whatever in developing warlike sentiment in the Chinese should become their instructors in science, and take advantage of the ascendancy which is given by this highly respected rôle in order to direct their future efforts towards war.

What is necessary also is to cease to menace the

Chinaman, constantly, with our cannons and our fleets, – to cease to employ violent means; what is needed is to teach him our sciences so that his industries may be developed, his resources and his well-being increased and the old nation will remain ‘the great Peace lover.’ Owing to the innate respect which this people has always shown to the creators of its civilization, its empire has until now remained intact.

The Chinaman believed in the authority of his philosophers, and in the authority of the chief of the social unity, the *houang ti*, the Son of Heaven, who symbolized in his eyes the paternal supremacy, sprung from the grouping of all families, magnified without limit until it reached celestial apotheosis. This belief was his safeguard, and prevented the collapse of a kingdom in which so many causes united to bring about its rapid and fatal disintegration.

This fetish, this *houang ti*, placed so high by tradition and religion, has maintained in their duty many sons who know little of each other, and are bound together by such loose ties that they seem to be unconscious of the most primitive form of human solidarity.

But at the present day the radiance of the fetish dazzles fewer eyes, and certain events threaten to shake the beliefs and the ancient traditions of the Chinaman. He asks to be enlightened; I have just indicated the means of directing him. Knowing his agelong inclinations, nothing should be easier, if one sets about it wisely, than to banish for ever certain appalling dangers in a future which cannot be far distant. Let us then be wise in good time!

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF CHINA'S  
ETHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS  
AND HER HISTORIC EVOLUTION

THE facts which I am about to set forth are the result of twenty years of observation, made on the spot, in the Far East, in the North as well as in the South, in the West as well as in the East of immense China.

Over and above long sojourns in certain regions of China such as Yunnan, Shansi, and especially Szechwan, I spent some years travelling over the roads in the plain and over the mountain paths, at the slow pace of a caravan, thus covering a total distance of not less than 12,500 miles.

On these roads every day thousands of these men of the yellow or Mongol race, as is supposed, were around me, exposing their faces to my full scrutiny.

In the fertile plains, moreover, in the midst of great cities like Chengtufu, Hankow, Tai Youan, Tientsin, Canton, etc., there were dense moving masses of people, impossible to number, rambling in all directions, slowly, very slowly, so rarely in a hurry, thus lending themselves entirely to my observation.

From this long period of study, elucidated by numerous measurements of which the School of Anthropology has received the firstfruits, some essential and undeniable facts clearly emerge.

They are far, however, from agreeing with the data of orthodox anthropology, especially that which deals

with the classification of races, divided and multiplied to the extent of defeating its own object.

The broad and very demonstrable synthesis which I have effected – a synthesis resulting from an enormous mass of observations and comparisons – will clash with many opinions, but nothing can prevail against facts, realities.

What, then, are these main facts which I have been able to disengage from my observations?

They can be summed up in a few words.

1. There exist all over China, in the coastal provinces as in the Thibetan borders, in the basin of the Yang-Tse as in that of the Yellow River, – there exist, I say, two clearly distinguishable human types, varying at once in size, colour of skin, structure of face, form of nose, etc.: the one is of white race, and frequently of Semitic or Assyrian type; the other is frankly negroid.

2. Between these two extreme types, clearly established in their somatic limits, it is impossible to constitute one or more biological units, yellows or browns, because of the lack of a group of common characteristics which would definitely isolate such units from the black and white types.

Looked at from another point of view, if one studies Chinese civilization in detail in the light of anthropology, as I have been able to do, one cannot fail to notice that social and economic facts agree clearly with biological facts to demonstrate the respective influences of the two prototypes, Aryan and negroid; two social and religious forms are easily recognizable, though more or less blended, as in India.

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It is needless to add that the white element definitely predominated during the course of the centuries, notwithstanding its numerical inferiority. This it is which has allowed the development of the civilization called Chinese, but whose original source could not be located in the valley of the Yellow River, but most decidedly in Western Asia.

Tradition, history and anthropology (I refer to the recent studies I made in Shansi) combine to show that white races, either Aryan or Semitic, and under different names, colonized the valley of the Wei, then that of the Yellow River, thus laying the foundation of the Chinese Empire.

Then, both before and after the Christian era, these same races ceased not to penetrate that empire, peacefully or by force, both by land and by sea, in every epoch.

By land at once by the south-west via Burmah and Yunnan; by the west, via Turkestan; by the north, via Mongolia and Siberia.

Pacific conquests: as, for example, that brilliant Greco-Buddhist civilization, which from Bactria and the Indus Valley invaded and transformed China, as also Indo-China, and transformed them in art and science as well as in religion.

Chinese art was already impregnated with Assyro-Babylonian art before the Christian era.

Or, later, Arab influence, and above all the action of conquerors called Mongols, but in reality Turks who had come under Iranian influence, and who brought to China all that proved most durable in Greco-Roman and Persian civilization.



## MODERN CHINESE CIVILIZATION

But a constant and inevitable extinguisher occurred in the fatal reaction of a considerable mass of negroids and inferior half-breeds, which formed the majority of the Chinese population. This is doubtless the cause of so many eclipses in the evolution of the Chinese; in particular, the cause of those long periods of crystallization which succeeded each other in the course of centuries, and the last of which is connected with the Manchu period.

### MORPHOLOGICAL FEATURES

I started my career in China in 1901, in the province of Szechwan on the High Yangtse, or Blue River, a province as large as France, and the richest in China.

It is bordered on the west by Thibet, and on the north by the Tsao Ti, or Grassland (steppe), the sources of the Hoang-ho, or Yellow River.

I lived some years in Chengtufu, the capital, a city containing with its suburbs more than a million inhabitants, and situated in the midst of a plain swarming with people (6 million souls).

Chengtufu is within immediate reach of a considerable mountain chain inhabited by numerous tribes of Mantsi, that is to say, barbarians, for so the Chinese designate all foreign races, including those of Europe.

Szechwan being a rich country with a temperate climate has not failed to excite the cupidity of every conqueror who in the course of history dominated China either wholly or in part, both before and after the Christian era.

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Szechwan also commands the routes to Burmah and India. It is even certain that China received her first civilization by this route, at the same time as her chief cereal, (*ta meitsi*) rice. This ancient way served at once for migration and commerce; long before the Christian era it extended by way of India as far as Persia and the valley of the Oxus.

Szechwan thus saw other strangers besides armed invaders; very numerous were the migratory movements from poorer neighbouring regions to this land of promise, to *pei mi*, or white rice. These movements were even ordered frequently by emperors in the course of the struggles in which so often the North of China came to grips with the South.

In particular, in the sixteenth century, a certain General, continuing the work of the hordes of Kubla Khan, exterminated, it is said, more than half of the population, so that the Emperor was obliged to order a levy *en masse* of families in Central and Eastern China to repopulate the unhappy Szechwan.

As, on the other hand, more advanced groups from the coast belt, Cantonese and Fo-Kienese, have always been largely represented at Szechwan, in the capacity of big merchants, manufacturers and bankers, it is permissible to conclude that this vast province of 40 millions of people is inhabited by a veritable conglomeration of Chinese peoples, and thus represents from an ethnical point of view almost the whole empire, and forms a compendium of it.

And this is not all. The broad mountainous barrier which shuts in Szechwan on the north and the

west, including the Thibetan Marches, is the home of numerous tribes more or less grouped in small peoples, who are called Lolos, Sifans, No Su, Miaotsi or Thibetans.

I thus found in Szechwan a field of action as extensive as it was varied, especially when I could travel and wander afar in plain and mountain. But what I ought to make clear in the first place is the surprise I felt when I began to go up the valley of the Blue River in having to bow to the evidence that all these Chinamen, who were incessantly moving in and out of my field of vision, were often very different from one another. Above all I was greatly astonished not to see only yellow men with the almond eye, but to observe, on the contrary, an appreciable number of people whose skin was truly white and even rosy, and whose eye was scarcely oblique at all and often horizontal.

Later, I was obliged to form the following conclusions: (1) There were not in the different social classes only men with broad faces and prominent cheek-bones, as the geographers write, with broad nose and more or less definitely prognathous; on the contrary. (2) Every one was not smooth-skinned, far from it. (3) There were certain individuals of tall stature, nearly 6 feet high, long-headed, thin-nosed, white-skinned and bearded, by the side of other types really small, averaging 5 feet in height, with very dark skin, broad face, flattened nose often with wide nostrils. This latter type, which I named the 'little race,' was always to be found at the foot of the social ladder

among the coolies, in the professions despised by Chinamen.

One day I set out for the mountains of the West, towards Ta Liang Shan, or the Great White Mountains; there I met the Lolo and the Sifan: a human type of great stature, often leptorrhine (nose thin and arched), constituting the dominant element, the aristocracy of the tribes. They are called 'Black Bones' amongst the Lolos.

But I met also the very small specimens mentioned before, with features even coarser than those on the plain of Chengtufu, very platyrrhine (nose wide and flattened) and very dark-skinned. Naturally also I noticed some yellow men with the Mongolian eye; but many with a very variable shade of skin, and with the eye-slits of an ill-defined form.

The curious small-sized platyrrhine type presented itself in its completeness in these mountains, and isolated itself from other groups by a facial appearance which I considered as its true ethnic mark — that of a negroid with the hair sometimes woolly, broad face and prominent cheek-bones; these men were slaves to the 'Black Bones,' that is to say, the aristocracy of the Lolo tribes and also the Sifan tribes.

And it must not be forgotten that we are here in the middle of Far West China on the Thibetan borders, 1,875 miles, as the crow flies, from the Chinese seas, 2,500 miles from the Philippines or Borneo on the east, more than 1,250 miles from the Indian Ocean, south, and more from the Malay Peninsula; that is to say, the regions where one would until now have localized the negro.

After Szechwan I penetrated into Yunnan and also Thibet, that enormous eastern mountain chain with deep valleys of wild beauty, unequalled in the world.

In this Thibetan mountain region, in particular in the valley of the Yalung, I came again upon the fine Aryan or Assyroid type of great stature, often with features of remarkable refinement.

I remarked also the negroid of small size forming a strange contrast in these isolated mountains to the handsome physique of the white racial type.

Between these two types thus defined, there was naturally evolved in the social framework of the tribe a yellow group, more numerous than the Aryan group or the negrito nucleus.

In the interval I made observations the whole length of the immense valley of the Yang-Tse, up and down which I travelled thousands of miles; also in the South at Hong-Kong and Canton, which, like Shanghai, Hankow and Tien-tsin, constitute marvellous ethnic observatories.

On my last journey I set foot in Northern China, of which I had only vague knowledge, and settled in Shansi, that is to say in the very centre of that enormous territory—that geographical unit—which extends from the Gulf of Pe-chi-li to Russian Turkestan. This great province of Shansi, bounded on the north by Mongolia and on the south by the Yellow River, possesses the very important distinction of being situated on the route of the great movements of peoples from West to East and vice versa, or from North to South, during the whole course of history, before

and after the Christian era. Shansi is on the high road trodden by the incessant flow of migrations and of invasions which, by way of Siberia and Turkestan and Mongolia, have interrupted the evolution of the Chinese people since the most remote times. Add to this the continuous and penetrating action of India, which by its art, science, and religions, Buddhism in particular, completed the work of the ancient Iranian or Semitic civilizations, with which the Chinese are so impregnated.

But who were these invaders and of what race? For centuries the Chinese chroniclers have not ceased to tell of them, so greatly has their country suffered from them. But it required a learned Jesuit, Father Wieger, to extract from these confused Annals of Empire some information the interpretation of which may be of interest.

Thus we learn that in A.D. 316 the *Hiong Nou*, that is to say the Huns or Turks, shattered the empire of Tsin, and forced the Son of Heaven to transfer his capital to the Blue River at Nankin. But how did these terrible nomads, whose habitat had been Mongolia, find themselves in a position to oust the Emperor 1,000 miles to the south, — that is to say from the banks of the Yellow River to those of the Blue River? Because, a long time since, Huns had conquered the Northern provinces, and were solidly entrenched in Shensi and Shansi, in the historic valley of the Hoang-ho.

But to what race did these Huns belong? Were they not members of the yellow race? The Annals will answer the question.

A General of the name of Cheu Min, desiring to free Shansi from the lordship of the Huns, gave orders secretly to massacre them all: 200,000 were put to the sword (A.D. 350); the massacre was so pitiless, the Annals add, that even *bearded* Chinese were also killed because mistaken for Huns.

Then they were not Yellows, these Huns with long beards and blue eyes, according to some Chinese chroniclers, who occupied Shansi for some centuries. But can they to-day have totally disappeared? Should I not have been able to meet with them again in the province, in this great central valley of the Hoang-ho, especially as in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries of our era, their race was still mistress of China (the Mongol Dynasty of the Tuan).

The problem was of great interest.

Now I was able immediately to discover, making my way along the roads and pathways of Shansi, in the valleys as well as in the mountains, that the Aryan and other types of the white race, particularly the Assyrian, not only passed this way in conquering hordes, but, more than that, occupied the soil for centuries, and still occupy it to-day.

In the country, in short, in the approaches to the villages, my astonishment was great to meet peasants of tall stature, white skin, rosy face, thin and arched nose, and even blue eyes, having not a single characteristic of the classic type called Mongol, of small stature, yellow skin, almond eyes, broad flattened nose. This tall Chinese peasant of Caucasian type was not new to me; I had noticed him in Central and Western

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China, but never in such compact groups, forming indeed the dominant mass of the population, more or less mixed with a little negroid race spread over the whole territory of the old Empire as in India – an observation of great importance.

In fact, if we compare the ethnical constitution of India with that of China, – the physical characteristics of the races which inhabit it, – one cannot help being struck with the likeness between them, in spite of some dominant features.

A fact not less important is that after having for many years made observation of millions of individual Chinese, I have tended to recognize only these two types clearly differentiated from the mass, – the Aryan or Semitic type and the negroid, usually of small stature.

As for the 'yellow' race, I have no doubt that it is a hybrid of whites and blacks perpetuated through centuries or rather millenniums: hence the marked polymorphism and variety of colour now existing.

But when one considers the biological value, the psychic potentiality of the two racial prototypes and their cross-breeds, one does not hesitate to decide that the Aryan or the Semite was the real creator of the old civilizations as well as that of the present day. The great empires of history owe their foundations to him, even the Chinese Empire in which the fecund and organizing element is still easily recognizable by him who has eyes to see. The same is true of Japan, where certain characteristics of the white race can be clearly discerned amongst the upper classes.



Moreover, before as well as after the Christian era, the white races of Western and Central Asia have not ceased to penetrate China either peacefully or in war, as much by land as by sea, in every epoch.

How many times has the unhappy Chinese Empire been wrecked and dismembered by the assaults of the white race, — Indo-Scythians, Sarmatians, Huns, On-Uighurs or Turks! All, doubtless, of the Iranian or Semitic stock, or rather a mixture of both.

No longer is it possible to write seriously, as did a certain recent author in a work on Asia, that the Turk, the *Yellow*, it appears, has turned white in his march towards the west far from the Mongol steppe, and that the influence of time and environment has transformed his ugly primitive face to that of a pure Iranian or Mediterranean.

But why do historians find it necessary to limit themselves so often to recopying the same statements and adopt them as so many 'revealed truths.' A historian of Asia, moreover, cannot do useful work if he has no knowledge of anthropology. The linguist having declared that the Turk belongs to the *yellow* race, the historian is content to write down this opinion, when it would have been so easy of verification or refutation. Linguists and historians should cease to confuse language and race.

I have seen present-day Mongols from Mongolia. Well, do not imagine that they constitute a very distinct racial type according to and conforming to the classic model. On the contrary, the different types are numerous, and amongst them you can isolate only

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two; one of small stature, dumpy and thick-set, of yellow or brown skin, broad face, nose more or less flattened, eye more or less oblique or even horizontal; the other, tall, long or oval face, thin nose arched or otherwise, often with white or pale yellow skin.

The same can be said of the Manchu, certainly, brother of the race, or rather of the complex of races.

Besides, in contact with the present Mongols, on the water-shed of the Altai as well as in the mountain range of Tian Shan, you will still find to-day the Kirei, or Kirghiz, a Kirghiz mussulman tribe, of white race, in the act of driving back these Mongols to the east.

The Russian from the high valley of the Irtish, the Obi and the Yenisei or from the Baikal region, is exercising the same thrust towards the east and the south.

In the midst of Kansu, west of the capital Lanchow, you will find a grouping of about 10,000 individuals, with fine long beards, white skin, and tall stature, speaking old Turkish.

There are the same groupings much more numerous in the valley of the Tarim, in Chinese Turkestan.

I need not repeat what I said of Shansi.

Briefly, the white races, ancient and those of the present day, pure and hybrid, have not ceased to dominate Asia. And those whose ancestors sometimes invaded and occupied China still remain there, especially in the North; I have just explained this, thus adding confirmation and explanation to history.

Do you still remember the great deeds of the On-Uighurs, those Turks so impregnated with Greco-

Iranian culture, authors of all the very ancient inscriptions found from one end of Mongolia to the other?

Towards the third century before Christ, their tribes began to migrate, and conquered the whole of Central Asia, including Southern Siberia. These famous warriors, according to the Chinese Annals, had often fair hair and blue eyes. It was the Nestorians who initiated them in Hellenic culture.

The English geographer Carruthers (*Unknown Mongolia*, 1914) describes the stone statues which stand everywhere in Siberia round the *kurgans* or tumuli set up by the On-Uighurs. These monoliths form a landmark in the immense region which stretches from the valley of the Yenisei to Southern Russia.

'We noticed,' says Carruthers, 'some remarkable effigies with striking facial features. We often saw the strong features of a warrior, a type we amused ourselves by likening to a Colonel of the British Army, by reason of his well-groomed moustache and general military appearance.'

But there is more still: the great Russian archæologist Adrianoff, who has spent a lifetime in excavating these *kurgans*, found in the high valley of the Yenisei skulls and masks of beaten gold, representing remarkably Aryan features. He has also established that this race had the custom of burying with the corpse all that it possessed — wives, slaves, horses, objects of current use, of which some were in bronze, gold, or silver, or in the case of tools, in iron: graves of chiefs, no doubt.

But does not such a custom remind us of Egypt and

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of the aborigines of Persia and Mesopotamia? And also of the Myceneans?

In any case, we now know by tangible proofs that in very old days a race of the Aryan or Semitic type already in an advanced stage of culture, lived on the borders of Mongolia and in Southern Siberia as well as in Northern China. Anthropology, moreover, allows us to affirm, apart from the teachings of archæology and history, that the white race during long centuries revealed its vitality and its superiority from the banks of the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea as far as the coasts of the Pacific, through the famous corridor of the steppes thousands of miles long; and that the Chinese Empire was its creation.

One is astounded at the amazing vitality, as also at the qualities of organization and execution, amounting almost to genius, of these Turco-Iranian people, who filled history with their high deeds.

For long centuries they played a preponderating part in China, India, the tableland of Persia and in Southern Russia.

Then the day came when the whole of Asia was conquered, and submitted in terror: when Europe trembled, not only on the banks of the Danube, but also on the banks of the Loire; the day came when Byzantium herself fell with a crash before their assaults. For centuries and centuries, before as well as after Christ, these Turco-Mongol tribes ploughed their way through the famous corridor of the steppes, that enormous stretch of grassland arrested at the east by the Yellow Sea, at the west by the Black Sea.

But they knew also how to settle at certain epochs, – to the detriment of China and other countries of Central Asia, but happily for us: for if Attila had succeeded in dragging behind him the *Hsiong Nou*, or Eastern Turks, that is to say those who were roving in Mongolia and Manchuria, who knows if his rush on Europe would not have ended in a permanent conquest?

But what were these Turks or Turanians, what were the Huns of Attila, or again the Mongols of Genghiz Khan? If we are to believe our historians, Huns and Mongols are of the yellow race. 'They swarm like locusts, and look more like monsters with dogs' heads than like men; animals' blood is their common drink, and human flesh their favourite meat. Their legs are so short that to get on horseback they have to make use of a step ladder with three rungs.' Thus speaks a chronicler.

Another affirms that 'the grass ceased to grow where such a cavalry had passed.' We are enlightened!

Listen also to what the historian Jornandes says of the racial origin of the Huns: 'Amongst the Gothic people there were witches. King Filimer drove them away to a solitary place. The evil spirits that prowled in that desert mated with the witches, and thus Huns came into the world' (*History of the Goths*).

As for modern historians, they all tell us that the armies of the Huns or Mongols were entirely composed of yellow men, and that even the Turk, so near them and thus easily observed, is 'a stout man with an enormous head, a round flat face, heavy eyebrows,

thick lips and cheeks,' – a yellow man, in a word. The same description is given of the Magyar and Bulgarian.

But what is the truth? I will speak not for the anthropologist, but simply for anyone who has eyes to see.

The Turk is one of the finest specimens of the white race, tall, with long and oval face, thin nose, straight or arched, thin lips, eye quite open, very often grey or blue, without prominent eyebrows.

It is needless to add that the Magyars and Bulgars belong also to the white race, though a certain author recently assigned them to the yellow race, as also the Turk, confused formerly with the Huns and the Mongols.

In the same way, has it not been written, and have not imitators repeated, that the Ottoman Turk owes his fine physical type to the institution of the harem? As if the possession of a large number of foreign wives was possible for the mass of the Turks! How could the habits of a few privileged persons affect the ethnic character of a whole race?

Now, there are certain undeniable historic facts which recall that the greater part of the armies of Attila, and later those of Genghiz Khan, were composed of Turks, Iranians, and Wusuns with blue eyes. And all these peoples of the Caucasian race were the real Huns, the Mongols, the bearded warriors of great stature of which the Chinese Annals speak, – irresistible fighters because of their superiority in organization and equipment.

But, then, what were the yellow men? For they were to be found amongst these hordes: those of short stature, flat nose, prognathous jaw, thick-lipped mouth, – veritable negroids which I met with all over China, mingled to-day with the yellow men (real hybrids) and the white. These negroids were the grooms and army servants, – that crowd of slaves and of subjects, – men whom great captains have always trailed behind them, and have utilized for the baser tasks of conquest. For example, the Turks, or *Hsiung Nou*, had always reinforced their hordes with contingents of the little yellow race, often negroid. China from this point of view seemed to them an inexhaustible reservoir. As we know, Attila, Genghiz Khan and Tamburlaine did the same. Moreover, in recent years, did not the Allies in the Great War mobilize contingents of yellow and black men? And would anyone say that the Germans were conquered by these auxiliaries, that these were the men who organized and achieved victory?

History is constantly repeating itself.

Yet, how is it that the historians of the epoch have spoken only of horrible little fighting men with yellow skin, thievish and ferocious? Doubtless because the great hordes of warriors and white chieftains did not strike the imagination of the peoples of Europe to the same degree as this other novel race, differing so much from their ethnic type, and whose ferocity would leave poignant memories behind, – a ferocity in good preservation at the present time (I speak from experience).

Besides, these yellow or negroid devils, poor

wretches, of a low grade in biological development, of whom I had time to make a long study, could certainly not be the groups of active conquering armies, the doers of so many great military and political deeds. This inferior race of poor mental capacity would have been totally incapable of the mighty effort of thought and organizing achievement which brought under one sceptre all the bellicose nomads and settled peoples of Central and Eastern Asia, to fling them again as far as Europe.

The Genghiz Khans, the Tamerlanes, the Kubla Khans, were not yellow men, but Turco-Iranians, of the kingly tribes of Mongolia. Their Generals and other officers had Turkish names. All these warriors were of the same race as the blue-eyed On-Uighurs, who were also their teachers.

As to the name 'Mongol' applied to a whole people, it must not be forgotten that in its origin it was only the name of a single tribe who had adopted the name of one of its ablest chiefs, Mong Gou, the ancestor of Genghiz Khan. This tribe quickly became paramount under this Mong Gou; then the genius of a Khan, that is to say, of Genghiz, outrivalled all the great deeds of the On-Uighurs, the Naimans and other kingly Turkish tribes, thus making his clan for ever illustrious.

Thus, what was in the first place the name of a single chieftain, then of his tribe, historians have converted into the name of a race, of that enormous human mass, covering a great part of Asia, and even some regions in Europe.



Now there exists no race specifically Mongol, and I have given my reasons for that statement (Society for Study of the Human Form), and historical suggestions and interpretations of texts ought not to prevail against biological facts.

To-day throughout the whole of Northern China and Mongolia there can be recognized pure-blooded or hybrid descendants of the Turco-Iranians or Semites, by the side of the little yellow or brown negroid race, which they had enslaved and carried in the train of their armies.

But is it not strange that a specialist, author of a classic on Anthropology, should affirm, like a simple historian, a fact which he was wrong not to verify on the spot: 'there are no leptorrhine noses (thin and prominent) in China, no bearded men, and no blue eyes.' He thinks then that all the people called 'Mongols' are yellow. He has not been to China.

The conquering Turco-Mongols have also been regarded as barbarians: it is a manifest error. They had in the first place inherited one of the finest cultures in history, the Iranian, and were afterwards initiated into Greek science, arts and even philosophy, by the Nestorians. The envoys of St. Louis, the Pope and other sovereigns to the courts of the Mongolian Khans were impressed with their high culture, not less than by the physical resemblance of these great chieftains to Europeans. These conquerors were men of powerful brain, beings highly developed biologically.

This is the reason why the present inhabitants of Mongolia, whose features as well as their intelligence

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are generally of an inferior racial type, ought not to be considered as the real descendants of the old *Hsiang Nou*, the Turco-Mongols; the most that can be said is that they are their hybrid descendants.

Moreover, all recent travellers in Mongolia ask the question: 'How is it that a race once so powerful and capable of such feats of conquest, should be to-day degenerate and reduced in number? Are they really the same people?'

The explanation is simple: the Mongol tribes of the present day represent only the wreck and refuse of the ancient hordes, their auxiliaries or negroid slaves, or even their hybrids, the yellow men.

The great Turco-Mongol race having swarmed too freely over the Asiatic and European world, the great reservoir of warriors of yore gradually became exhausted. These hordes, besides, did not simply pass through new lands; these appeared so rich that they gave up the thought of return. There was an ever-rising tide of men, which finally submerged Byzantium.

The groupings of slaves and half-breeds were thus definitely abandoned in the desert, on the steppe, in this Mongolia where they vegetate, incapable of vital reaction.

Recently, a Polish romancer announced to us that Mongol tribes driven by some mystic religious impetus were about to surge anew from Gobi to ravage Europe. Has he ever been in contact with those poor creatures, whose number (a million in all) and whose psychic potentiality are well calculated to reassure us?

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There is China, certainly, a considerable mass, and impressive to those who do not know it. How often has the spectre been evoked of these millions of men throwing themselves upon Europe, as in the days of Attila!

This peril is non-existent in the form which has hitherto been given to it, the Chinaman being totally incapable of a like effort of invasion, requiring an amount of science and organization beyond his present state of development.

I speak here in knowledge of the facts, basing myself on scientific data and on observation taken from life, spread over twenty years.

Let us suppose, however, that China finds one day a single great renegade nation of the white race, who can organize and weld her masses, and throw them on Europe in a rush which may submerge her.

Now, in no part of the world is the Bolshevik so active as in China, of whom he declares himself the champion against the great capitalist nations – 'scourges of the world' – thus he shouts every day to the people of Asia. He is trying thus to turn the masses of the East to his purpose of universal dominion.

What must we think? Can Communist barbarism reinforced one day by yellow and negroid masses become a real danger to Central and Western Europe? Assuredly, if Europe remains as disunited as at present, and if the United States do not understand the extent of their solidarity with the old continent.

We must look at the facts: here are 800 millions of

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Asiatics, without counting Africans, who to-day are rising in a frenzy for freedom against the supremacy of the white race: Moscow is fanning the flame with all her might.

This is, then, the time for high resolutions, for unreserved mutual help: our civilization is at stake.

I shall not repeat what I said of the Chinaman of the present day, in the various regions. At the same time it will be well to draw attention to the inhabitant of the great coast cities, who is perceptibly more highly developed than the masses of the interior for the reason that for centuries before and after Christ, he has come into permanent contact with white races, — Syrians, Jews, Hindus, Persians, Arabs, and even Romans: and from the seventeenth century with Europeans.

These Chinese of Canton, Foo-Chow, Ning-po and Shanghai, who doubtless have come under the impress, racial and cerebral, of the white peoples, constitute to-day the mass of business men, great merchants and bankers, whose qualities are well known. They form, besides, throughout the Empire, the population of clerks of all sorts in the yamens and the counting-houses. They are naturally to be found in great numbers in the mandarinat.

The Chinese themselves are perfectly aware of this hybridization, for one of the most common insults is that of the *tsa chong*, or mixture of breeds.

I need not return to the psychic characteristics of the Chinaman, but I will say a few words on Confucius, who played a primary part in the modelling of Chinese character. In philosophy, we have been from child-

hood nursed on the great names of Confucius and Laotze; they have been consecrated as the greatest of thinkers, the sages of sages, the real forerunners.

Is it so? If to study the works of Confucius one uses Father Wieger's translation, incontestably the best, one can sum up in a few words the doctrine of the philosopher.

He believed in the theism and animism of his time: he had a firm belief in divination by means of the shell of the tortoise. He believed above all in Tchong long, that is to say, the Middle Way – we recognize India here – in opportunism. No sympathy, no anti-sympathy, no strong convictions, no tenacious will. At first sight, no approval, no disapproval, no acceptance, no rejection. After reflection, never to decide for an extreme, for excess and deficiency are alike evil. Follow always the *Via Media*, take in everything a middle position, temporize, shuffle. Every direct blow is a fault. Every decided opinion hurts someone. To insist on your rights is to commit a wrong. As for the masses, Confucius considered them only as the foremost domestic animals, who must be looked after in order to get more out of them.

As to Laotze, the philosopher contemporary of Confucius, he did not invent Taoism; this doctrine is nothing but a reproduction of that then current in India called the *Upanishads*, a realistic pantheism.

It is in fact, as you know, the doctrine of abstinence and renunciation. There are no rules, no rites, no code of morals, for fear of warping the natural instincts. There is neither good nor evil, nor supernatural sanc-

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tions. As for the credulous masses, they must be treated with a benevolent pity.

Such is Chinese philosophy, a borrowed philosophy of Indian origin. It has no depth of penetration and cannot be compared with the conceptions of a Plato or a Marcus Aurelius.

At the same time, the Chinese code of morals contains some excellent guides to conduct, especially when it has to do with filial piety, the cult of the ancestors; no one will dispute this. But this code is not such as to impress by its superiority, and it has never created these supermen, these phenomenal beings of which we are always being reminded.

Speaking of these sages, Voltaire in particular exaggerates beyond all limits the value of their teaching. One even wonders whether he ever read the *Canonic*s or the *Classics*. Certainly he had a special end in view, which can be guessed; he makes it apparent when he dares to affirm that the Chinaman, contrary to the European, knows no superstition.

Superstition in all its most primitive, most degrading forms is the running sore of China, the canker that gnaws it and paralyses every act of its existence.

From this point of view, no comparison could be established between the European, for the main part enfranchised from all this fetishism, and the miserable Chinaman who for long years yet will remain its willing victim.

## CHINESE ART

Was Chinese art really a spontaneous and lasting creation and did it develop in the framework of

Chinese society, inspired only by its own national genius?

To reply to this question, I cannot do better than quote certain archæologists, particularly the Russian Rostovtzeff and the English Bushell.

*Iranian and Chinese Art.*

I quote:

‘The striking resemblance between the symbolic animal of the Scythians (Iranians) and the Chinese cannot be accidental.

‘The Assyro-Babylonian decorative designs are predominant in the art of these two peoples. There is not a shadow of doubt that both received their symbolic animal from a common source – from Iranian Central Asia.

‘Doubtless the Scythians were more strongly influenced, in consequence of their relations with Persian and Greek art. Even so, the common origin is plain.

‘At a more recent epoch, the repetition of the same fact is revealed in China, the China of the Hellenic period (Han Dynasty, 206 B.C. to A.D. 221).

‘Even the military organization of China was transformed by the Han Dynasty on the Iranian model. This Iranian influence made itself felt in China not through Parthea and Bactria, but by the medium of the Sarmatians (Iranians) who took part in the incessant attacks of the Huns against China.

‘The Huns had no culture of their own; they had borrowed everything, even their military art, from the Sarmatians and the Alans.

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'China adopted also the equipment of the Sarmatians, their cuirass and their coat of mail, their heavy lances, their conical helmets, their characteristic arrows with triangular heads, their short poignard with curved point, the harness of their cavalry, their long-handled and pommelled swords with jade guards.

'Jade ornaments are most common in the tombs of Southern Russia (Sarmatian tombs).

'The custom in certain Chinese dynasties of burying dozens of little clay figures (gods of death) to represent the funeral procession, is Iranian.

'Amongst these statuettes can be recognized the horned lion-gryphon which is Iranian, and another type half-man, half-lion, the head of which is covered with an elephant's skin. Other statuettes of Sarmatian conception, of the grotesque type, are found by the dozen in the Chinese tombs of the Han Dynasty.

'We find also the same rattle in Scythian and Chinese tombs; mirrors, and metal pots of the same shape in Sarmatian and Chinese tombs.

'The decorative design of the gryphon with eagle's head and eyes is constantly employed by the Chinese of the Han Dynasty; it is the same with the floral motifs representing animals' extremities.

'The characteristic of the ornamental system of ornament in the Chou Dynasty (1122-249 B.C.) is the representation of fantastic animals of four types: (1) a gryphon with the head of a horned crested lion; (2) a gryphon with an eagle's head, furnished with ears and a crest; (3) a dragon or serpent-gryphon,



with horned head, teeth, and sometimes ears or crest;  
(4) the same dragon, but without horns.

'These types of composite animals are not Chinese, though of Chinese making: they are entirely characteristic of Assyro-Babylonian art, derived from Sumerian Art.' (Rostovtzeff, *Iranians and Greeks in South Russia*.)

Let us look much later at the first centuries of the Christian era, when a complete transformation of the arts of China took place, that is to say at the epoch of the introduction of Buddhism into the Empire of the Hans – 'the influence of the ideas and arts of India,' says Bushell, who is an authority, 'was *all-pervading*.'

'Chinese art was nothing but convention and routine; Buddhist art brought it out from this stagnation.' (Bushell.)

But what is this Buddhist art? You know: recent discoveries in Chinese Turkestan and at Honan (Central China) show that the school of Gandhara initiated India, China, and even Japan, into the beauties and perfection of Greek art.

Alexander was not only a great warrior; he is revealed as also a great organizer. It was indeed he who prepared the way for the dominance of Hellenic art and even Science in nearly the whole of Asia, with the Hindu as interpreter.

The Chinese chroniclers themselves acknowledge that with Buddhism they received the gift of Greek artistic and scientific culture. The whole of their civilization, they add, was transformed and revived.

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Bushell recognizes it: 'It was the golden age of the arts, but also the apogee of letters and poetry.'

This was the great Tang period, of which China is so proud. But this renaissance could not stand; on the next dynasty, the Song, decadence is evident: not only did the arts degenerate, but also letters. Nothing was written but commentaries and encyclopædias, whilst the canons of art deteriorated and became distorted.

But there is a fresh awakening at the Ming epoch (fourteenth century). Who was the moving spirit? The great Mongol Kubla Khan, who depopulated Central and Western Asia, including part of Europe, depopulated it of its artists and learned men and craftsmen to adorn China over which he ruled, — to make it the most powerful, the most cultured, the most prosperous of empires, surpassing Rome and Byzantium.

'As regards the ceramic art, it is known that the first painted Chinese porcelain is decorated with Arab characters surrounded with conventional flowers, betraying a marked Persian influence.' (Bushell.)

It is now well known that the famous glazed tiles, yellow, green, turquoise blue of the Imperial temples at Peking reproduce entirely Chaldean and Persian technique.

China owes to the Arabs the technique of enamelled glass.

As for the art of enamel, the Chinese themselves confess that it came from Byzantium.

As regards the ceramic art in general, the astonish-

ing fact is that this art only attained full development at a very late stage. As Bernard Rackham well said, the vases made before the Christian era belong to the category called 'primitive,' and are often considered as having no other value than an ethnic one. This pottery is not conspicuous for variety: nevertheless, some unglazed vases of the Chou Dynasty are of real beauty. (It is known that the founder of this dynasty was of Turco-Iranian origin, and that at all times very active relations existed between China and Central and Western Asia by way of Turkestan.) Recent excavations in Honan (North Central China) have brought to light polychrome pottery of black or white designs on a red ground, remarkably resembling those of Anau (Turkestan) and even those found in Greece and Sicily. Besides this, amongst many of the archaic specimens collected in China, it is easy to recognize the influence of Susa and of the majority of its models. From the point of view of technique the Chou pottery was nevertheless far from being perfect, and we must come to the Han Dynasty (two centuries B.C. and two centuries after) to notice a real artistic progress.

Again the Chinese artist was behind Egypt and Greece by many centuries. Is it not also surprising that, after the Han Dynasty, Western influence on Chinese ceramics should be very marked, both in inspiration and technique?

In short, whether it is a question of ceramics, painting and sculpture, or again of literature, science and religion, and even political economy, one is

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obliged to acknowledge that the Chinaman has always been lacking in imagination, that he has rarely been a creator, but rather an imitator. If he has often shone in detailed work, he has been a stranger to large conceptions.

### SCIENCES

I will first say a few words on two questions over which much ink has been spilt: they are the Chinese astronomical system and the invention of gunpowder.

Léopold de Saussure, the most competent of authorities, wrote to me on the second of July, 1925: 'Your views are in unison with my conclusions, that the almanack of the very ancient Hsia dynasty is an evident application of the Indo-Iranian cosmological system. . . . Proof of an importation into China of superior elements of the Aryan race.'

As regards the invention of gunpowder, Marcellin Berthelot, our great chemist, declares that it was no more a Chinese invention than Greek fire. The merit of these discoveries goes back to the Byzantine Greeks.

In short, if we look for originality and real creative work in art and in science, we are greatly disappointed: the Chinese were borrowers, always borrowers. As regards moral codes and disciplines, we see, after the Buddhist era, Confucianism revive and exist up to our own day, and impose itself more strongly than ever in spite of its lack of energizing force. For all its essential precepts can be summed up under three heads: (1) Perpetuate the line; (2) Sacrifice regularly

on the altar or the tomb of the ancestors; (3) Assure the conservation of the family patrimony.

In a word, all is sacrificed to the family. No allusion is made to the public good, to the general interest, still less to the fatherland.

To-day the Chinaman is still in the patriarchal age, and he cannot get out of it in a day.

But in the intellectual sphere, why has the Chinaman shown so little of the creative power? Why has he been sunk in torpor for centuries, only recovering a little energy from time to time thanks to fresh supplies brought him by the foreigner at well-known epochs? We have explained this.

There is no renewing, neither is there any rejuvenescence in the governing class; in spite of the existence of the so much vaunted system of examination open to all, those chosen are found always to belong to the great families. There is no place in the mandarinat for the son of the people.

But how comes it that in the course of centuries no one has been found to shake off the tyranny of the old *litterati*, to transform the depressing ritual of the educational system, fatal to brain development? Is the race then lacking in will-power – can it live only on the past and in the past, incapable of an effort to free itself?

What is the reason for this bankruptcy? Without any doubt it is due to the constant and fatal reaction of the extinguisher of which I have spoken, – of this great mass of negroids and of inferior hybrids who

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form the majority of the Chinese population, and whose blood has fatally impregnated the élite by the easy method of the polygamy which is widely practised.

### THE POLITICAL SPHERE

In China there has never been any political unity, any more than ethnic or social unity.

Never has a country seen more revolutions and civil wars; and if it has survived, it can be said that it owes its life to its great distance from Europe.

Save for short periods of their history, the different provinces of China have lived a self-governing life under the control, more nominal than real, of Peking, and have remained indifferent to each other's fate, even in time of war.

The Viceroy, as also the high mandarins, are only tax collectors. The notables of every village, canton or city, carry on the administration on their own responsibility, and themselves maintain the roads and canals of their district.

Thus, where there is no collective effort, there is no community of soul or sentiment. The general interest is ignored. The mandarin who has paid for his right to enrich himself is never sure of the morrow. He is then in a hurry to heap up money for his old age, and is concerned with himself and not with his district. Thus it is from top to bottom of the mandarin ladder.

When we therefore examine the élite, the privileged class of *litterati* of whom Confucius is the prototype, we cannot help holding this class responsible in great part for the past and present situation of China. It

lived in isolation from the masses, set up on a pedestal, admiring itself and glorifying itself with an unfathomable pride.

The system of education and instruction which it had created ceased to stimulate its intelligence, or give it any creative energy. Thus it became stereotyped in the acquisitions of the past, — acquisitions whose source must be looked for in Western Asia.

On the other hand, ignoring the maxim *mens sana in corpore sano*, this class lived all the time in absolute bodily idleness, avoiding all movement and effort, going about only in a palanquin, and never using its muscles, — disdainful also of open spaces and that marvellous health-giver, fresh air — but on the contrary greedy of the joys of the table and the harem.

In the practical sphere, the mandarin, always a member of the too bookish lettered class, and contemptuous of all besides his classics, has been a wretched ruler; large ideas are foreign to him. He has never been able either to muster or to co-ordinate what is at his disposal, nor subsequently known how to frame a constructive policy when it is a question of the needs of the country as against the sum of its resources. There has never been a general budget for the empire, a budget worthy of the name.

When, on the other hand, you consider the great economic organizations of China, — railways, ports, factories, mining operations — you are forced to realize that without European help the Chinese would achieve only a mediocre return or even a rapid diminution of these industries. The railroads that he is now

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working, so prosperous in the days of European management, are to-day in a lamentable state, neither permanent way nor rolling stock being maintained.

Has the Chinaman at least been able to defend himself against the periodic scourges which have regularly assailed him during long centuries, – against flood, for instance, or against epidemics? No; he is still totally powerless in face of them; he is devoured by tuberculosis and syphilis; and cholera, the plague, smallpox and typhus fever take toll of him to an extent no European can imagine.

He is so immensely ignorant of hygiene that he is the victim of all the possible contagions, and he has remained in the age of lice and vermin, while the victims of itch and scab are innumerable.

As, on the other hand, infantile mortality exceeds 50 per cent., it is vain and absurd to go on speaking of 400 millions of Chinese. My statistics allow me to affirm that there are at most 300 millions, and that the population is not increasing.

One circumstance, however, one religion has saved China, and has preserved her through the ages from extinction: and that is ancestral worship, involving the dogma of procreation to the utmost extent, under penalty of every calamity for the disobedient.

It is this China, however, nearer the Middle Ages than the twentieth century, which in 1911 determined to pass abruptly from her secular absolutism to a democratic system.

You know what this experience has cost her during fifteen years, – poverty in the midst of anarchy, an



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immense poignant distress, and the loss of 20 millions of her population by civil war and famine.

This is the balance sheet of the Chinese republic from 1911 to this day, the balance sheet of a period of veritable retrogression, comparable only to the Bolshevik experiment.

*Et nunc erudimini gentes . . . Natura non facit saltus.*

## YOUNG CHINA

**I**N spite of the state of anarchy now existing in China, I was able to travel in the interior and accomplish my eighth mission, and above all carry out the geographical and economic study which I had planned, in 1923, in the great province of Shansi, on the borders of Mongolia.

The study of this part of the country has at last decided for me China's capability of evolution, taking into account her natural resources on the one hand, and, on the other, the physical and mental powers of her people.

I have thus acquired the elements of a complementary view of my earlier long studies in Central China and in the West, and I can, I think, affirm that I now have a general view of the economic situation, and, from that, the political situation of the old Empire, which cannot lend itself to optimistic conclusions. All the less as China is, it cannot be doubted, the pivot of the Pacific situation, and it may even be said the pivot of the world's equilibrium.

In short, it is for this economic prey, this enormous market, that to-day more than ever, England, America and Japan are fighting, with a persistence that may lead to conflict.

All the more as the situation has become complicated by the entrance of Russia on the scene, with the Bolshevik more imperialistic than the Czars, and strong in the great art of managing Oriental proletariats.

It is this situation which I am going to try to explain and analyse, in its repercussions of a political or economic character. I shall not fail also to consider the important problem of ex-territorial rights, — privileges to-day battered down by Young China, but nevertheless more than ever necessary to Europe and to the cause of peace. There is also the question of the new education, and its effect on the Chinese student.

On this head, a question frequently asked me is: 'What do you think of the present evolution of China?'

What I think I can express in one word, if what is meant is social progress, and not merely the mechanical improvements recently introduced into the Far East; this evolution is eminently of the 'backwards' type. The Chinese are returning to the feudal epoch of their history, to the rupture of all unity, political or moral. The present master of one or of several provinces is the Tu-Chun, real military dictator, powerful baron with his own army, his pretorians, by whose aid he dominates a more or less vast territory, exploiting it for his personal profit and the profit of his clan.

Even if a big railroad crosses his territory, the Tu-Chun does not hesitate to take for himself the largest share of the receipts.

It would be the same with the Customs revenues did not a handful of Europeans, representing the big creditor Powers, have charge of that money.

In certain provinces, too, the Tu-Chun has restarted the culture of the opium poppy.

Thus the political clans which are at present exploit-

ing China are not content with laying hands on her resources, seizing her public and private property at their convenience, but they are encouraging every vice which can become remunerative to them.

And the people pay the price, in physical and moral loss, in the reduction of their daily bread, already so meagre in quantity.

It is a fact that the agricultural production of China barely suffices in ordinary times to nourish the population, — how much less in times of drought or flood? It follows then that the introduction and rapid spread of the cultivation of the poppy in nearly all the provinces is one calamity more, by reducing the acreage for cereals. Is this the time to reduce the production of food, when famines are more frequent than ever?

Such is the present economic position, aggravated if not created by the rule of the Tu-Chuns, a rule which threatens to become still more harmful from the fact of the hysterical agitation among the school-children, — the students, as they call themselves, even if they have not yet reached their twelfth summer.

The incessant buzzing of these young hornets, their capering and disorderly activity, would soon exhaust itself and be no cause for anxiety, were it not directed and to a certain extent sustained by foreign elements, of strong will, and with a programme to bring about democracy at any price, even at the risk of raising all the yellow people against the whites.

In brief, the new student caste, having left the beaten track, and consequently discarded a past which under its patriarchal form had its grandeur,

— this new caste throws itself head foremost into the unknown, — in search of political and social panaceas of whose direction and scope it knows nothing.

The psychic development of the Chinaman, his age in biology, forbids him in fact such comprehension, and consequently any useful selection amongst those new ideas, some healthy, some unhealthy, which are coming to him from East and from West.

In these conditions, the new-style student and the new-style mandarin can only bring about trouble, anarchy. This is the brutal fact which I perceive in every sphere, and to which I shall return.

This confused ferment without order is also characterized by a very aggressive renewal of hatred of foreigners, which indiscreet tourist-missionaries call patriotism, or the spirit of nationality. Too many people really think that it is enough to stay some months at Shanghai or Peking, — that is to say, on the threshold of China, — and pick up some gleanings there, in order to have the right henceforth to dissertate at random on this immense country and its complex problems.

I have just alluded to the aggressive xenophobia of Young China. I could not but perceive it in a thousand forms as soon as I arrived at Hong-Kong and Canton; it was the same in Central China and finally in the North, and even in the interior of Shansi, a province which however is peaceful and in which alone reign order and quietude, thanks to the intelligent energy of the Governor-General, an example of the old Viceroy endowed with great administrative qualities.

Speaking just now of the régime of the military lords and of the anarchy which it brings, I said that the student class – that is to say, the future rulers of China – contribute largely to aggravate the existing troubles by its incessant and disorderly agitation. Here is a fact on the gravity of which all Europeans or Americans living in China are in full agreement, and do not fail to lament in their newspaper press as also in the meetings of their Chambers of Commerce.

Needless to say, the Chinese themselves are much more affected by the situation than Europeans.

The schoolboy element interferes in everything and everywhere, even, and indeed chiefly, in foreign politics, for it appears that internal problems and the desperate struggles between the clans do not suffice for its voracious activity.

How many times during these latter years has not the Central Government been summoned to conform with this or that 'instruction' with regard to a foreign nation, an instruction which emanates from committees of students? It was above all during the Washington Conference that these Committees gave themselves up to this pursuit with all their heart.

The serious boycotts from which Japan has suffered have naturally been organized by students, anxious before everything else to put themselves into prominence, even at the risk of grave and embarrassing complications for the Government.

What is most odd is that those for the moment masters in China have a veritable terror of these noisy bands of schoolboys, and dread the actions and atti-

tudes of these comic-opera tenors, who aspire to play and to provoke admiration on the world's stage.

Nothing is more characteristic, moreover, of the Chinaman than this theatricalism, this need of parading himself, mounting on the boards, if only to beat a drum.

The student, in short, meddles in everything, and whether it is a question of foreign affairs or of political economy or of finance, he signifies his orders to all, with a threat of reprisals if he is not obeyed, threats more especially to denounce this or that Governor whose conscience is not at ease.

The accusation most dreaded by men in office is not that of extortion, a venial offence in China, but rather that of being corrupted by foreign gold—of selling his country, — an accusation easily fashioned by excited young heads.

I must not fail to notice the frequency of 'direct action' among the students. Every European who has resided some time in China has seen defile one of these long, incredibly long, processions, with banners bearing appeals for vengeance, and fulminating demands in trenchant style.

And what do these processions consist of? Infants, — youths of both sexes with faces amazingly grave or rather without expression, proclaiming in shrill voice the sovereign rights of China and — of school-children.

The crowd looks on interested, ironical. It loves theatre and comedy, everything that provides it with distractions.

Street processions are generally inoffensive except

when a boycott of the foreigner is ordained; but what always causes astonishment to us Europeans is the occurrence of strikes, of real strikes, in the schools. These strikes, which last sometimes for weeks, sometimes for months, are decreed by a committee of pupils who put forward certain general demands, or wish to express dissatisfaction with their professors or principal.

A prevalent claim which foreigners know well is that the students should discuss the course of studies, and fix its character and extent. Above all they desire to reduce the length of their studies according to their own whims, and even go to the length of maltreating their masters, demanding their dismissal if these do not submit to their caprices.

The columns of the Chinese and foreign press record almost every week some noisy revolt of students, some strike of striplings directed against the school administration or the staff, in short against those who aim at initiating them in a certain amount of discipline as well as in a certain amount of knowledge.

Such are the deplorable effects produced upon young brains by those commodities recently imported into China, which are called liberty and democracy.

Of liberty the student makes full use; we have seen how he interprets it, to the deep despair of his family and of his teachers, and to the detriment of his future and of his capacity for action. At this period of the history of China, during a most difficult social and economic transformation, the Chinese student behaves like an *enfant terrible*.

Strange to say, this disorder in schools and univer-



sities has persisted for years, and no one has dared to bring the chaos to an end. All the constitutional authorities have allowed themselves to be made fools of, not excepting the guilds of bankers and great merchants, who were one day called upon to break off all transactions with a certain foreign power, which it seems had shown insufficient respect for the sovereign rights of China.

Such is the schoolboy of to-day in China, a noisy, buzzing fly on the wheel. It is however fair to say in mitigation of his faults that the student has been in some measure encouraged in his present attitude, in his formation of committees of public safety, and in some of his least reasonable demands, by a very well-meaning foreign philanthropic organization, which thinks it useful and beneficial to transform the Chinaman into an American and to make of China the great democracy of Asia.

This Society preaches emancipation and self-determination, and denounces all attacks on liberty, either political or social. But it has committed the imprudence of not taking into account the *psychic* age of the Chinaman, of ignoring his stage in the evolutionary process. It has inculcated principles which to be understood and wholesomely applied require a maturity and a mental poise which are not yet possessed by any but a few European and American democracies.

In short, the Chinaman is made to run before he has learned to walk.

For instance, is not the schoolboy taught to think himself possessed of all the rights of an enlightened

citizen? Whence comes the incentive to interest himself in all the features of the political and economic life of his country, — the obligation to interfere by speech and action every time that those in authority appear to be forgetting their duty?

Apparently every youth possesses the necessary intuition and correct judgment to deal with difficult national or international problems.

Accordingly the University student, already so prone to exaggerate his own importance, and to believe that he alone is able to assure the destinies of his country, has perforce profited to the full from a similar lesson, and consequently quickly acquired the habit of shouting his rights as a citizen, his special rights as belonging to the old privileged caste.

I was forgetting to add that the young girl-students are trying to imitate this fine example, and to signalize themselves by their claims and pretensions, — even the schoolgirls enrolled under the austere banner of the Y.W.C.A.

For instance, in October, 1923, at Hang Chow, this organization called together a Conference of its adherents from several provinces, to do what? — you would never guess — ‘to solve the great social and industrial problems of China.’

Nothing less than that!

With reference to this Conference, a big English daily paper at Shanghai published last year a significant letter from an occasional correspondent, entitled ‘Miss Americana.’ It introduced this young lady under her various aspects in China — doctor, teacher, mis-

sionary, globe-trotter and lecturer. The writer of this letter comments ironically but without prejudice or malice on the touching fervour of Miss Americana for democracy, and her passionate wish to make it triumphant all over the world. He draws attention too to the ardour of her faith in the equality of races and minds, in the need for the emancipation of all peoples, in her belief in the possibility of the transformation of humanity, the rapid conversion of hundreds of millions of *heathen*, – achievements in which the United States will take the leading part.

The author of the letter ended by the assertion that the present-day variegated education, half-foreign, half-national, given to the Chinese, and specially American teaching, was the real cause of the extravagant want of discipline of the present generation of students.

He added, 'Miss Americana does evil in China, but means so well!' Her faith, her candour, are really touching!

In October, 1923, finding myself at Peking, I learned that an American lady lecturer and magazine writer was giving a series of lectures there.

Here is a list of the subjects which she was treating in the girls' colleges: What the Chinese girl can do: (1) to arrive at a state of peace; (2) to create a universal language; (3) to realize the equality of man and woman; (4) to achieve the union of all known religions; (5), and, lastly, to inaugurate a new civilization based on science and on faith, the real solvents to throw into the crucible from which will gush out world peace.

The lady had panaceas for all the woes and all the mistakes of humanity; and she retailed them with pious conviction to young girls whose mothers and grandmothers (if of high social position) have always lived apart from the tumult of the world, in the interior of a yamen or rich private house, as secluded as Turkish ladies.

People do not realize, in short, that up to now the Chinese woman, even of quality, has been systematically kept in ignorance, and considered socially as non-existent; she is deprived even of authority in her own family. Woman does not count in China, and has not counted for long centuries. Although her ancestors built schools for their sons, it certainly never occurred to them to make any educational provision for their daughters, — those poor creatures debarred with their mother from the paternal table, relegated to the back of the house with the concubines and servants. (Nevertheless, China has had for several years Government schools for girls.) It is unnecessary to insist on the effects of atavism, on the spiritual and intellectual poverty which is the result of such an upbringing in the Chinese woman, intensified by her cloistered life. These poor brains congealed for hundreds and thousands of years are being abruptly brought into contact with all the rubbish of modern sociology; all the day-dreams, the nebulous ideals which have no meaning or interest, except to certain exalted minds, endowed with more emotionalism than sense.

European and American lecturers of both sexes

have swooped down upon China in large numbers during these last years. Some were of real value, — others were mere social mystics. The former might have made some beneficial impression on their audiences if they had been able to adapt themselves to the Chinese manner of thinking, to bring themselves down to a lower mental level than ours. But as they were ignorant of the ethnic and social environment of the Chinese, they could only discourse from a Western standpoint, could only express themselves in the language current in very advanced European circles. They could not be understood. Their moral and philosophic dissertations have only served to trouble the brains of their hearers, students for the most part, — to lead them astray in strange paths, to dangerous experiences.

Everything has been preached, — Communism, Bolshivism, and even Malthusianism.

But of all the social metaphysicians who have come to blazon their gospel to China, the most curious and the least comprehensible was certainly Bertrand Russell.

He was the first to scatter flattery broadcast, the first to see China through coloured glasses, — hence the danger of his propaganda.

His excuse would be that he was only a passing visitor in China. Even then, one suspects that he came with his preconceived ideas, with a vision of the old empire in a mirage of Socialism. One can guess that he came here to look for and thought he had found a 'promised land' where it might be possible to realize his social ideal of an earthly paradise.

Listen to what he says:

'China has discovered and practised for centuries a manner of life (indolence) which if it were adopted by every one would make the happiness of the universe. But the European has not been willing, because he is all for progress, itself the source of so many evils. The indifference of the Chinese to change, his passivity, are certainly less harmful than the vitality and the energy of the European.'

He continues: 'The Chinese seek after no other good than justice and liberty.' It is here very evident that Bertrand Russell is ignorant of all the social organism and the mental characteristics of the Chinese; he knows the past as little as the present. The past, — a terrible history of political upheavals and chronic suffering; the present, — the new régime designated democratic; all the world knows what it is, — a hard despotism.

We learn from Bertrand Russell also that the Chinese student forms one of the finest intellectual types of existing humanity. He is content to affirm this; he suppresses China's stagnation and her incapacity for evolution lasting for centuries. He does not attempt to explain this by a failure in cerebral power, the absence of the creative activity of the white race which has transformed Europe and the world. No, fixed in his idea that China is the 'promised land,' the Socialist paradise, he refrains from looking round him and inquiring: all is to be fine, brilliant, superior to the societies of Europe and America, whose 'absurd energy brings trouble everywhere.'

Thus he pronounces succinctly that Chinese students, young reformers as he calls them, are on the way to inaugurate a civilization and a culture immeasurably better than that worn-out, creaking organism which is called European Civilization.

In short, the Socialist apostle ends by giving this counsel: 'The man who esteems wisdom (inertia), beauty, and the joys of life (material joys, I imagine, highly prized by the Chinaman), ought to go to China.'

The rich Chinaman of the present day thinks the contrary; whenever he can escape from the hold of his surroundings he hastens to transport his penates to the great open ports under the European Concessions. The rich man of the Southern provinces takes refuge in mass in the English colony of Hong-Kong.

What conclusion was drawn from the sermons of the Socialist lecturer, what was the result of his extravagant praise of the youth of the schools? Once more then these youths have been exalted in their pride, the stupefying pride which was always a characteristic of the mandarin class, full of disdain for the Western barbarian. History teaches us that these 'intellectuals,' congealed in their out-of-date ideas, refused to understand last century human evolution and new economic necessities, whence came the cruel lessons which Europe had to give to the old petrified empire.

This ancient caste, interesting from some standpoints, loving culture and possessing a social code not without greatness, this caste by its pride and its contempt of all that does not emanate from itself, has been

the misfortune of China. But is it not to be feared that the new generation, spoilt by the wrong education, will fall into the mistakes of the older generation, and even aggravate them by the fact that it considers itself so much in advance of the latter.

Is it not learning Western science, of which its ancestors were ignorant?

Above all, Young China is bold, and thinks itself capable of everything. But with the complexity of modern problems, with the new needs of China, the necessary transformation of her vast unhomogeneous territory, no Government of whatever stability will be capable of organization by the single effort of the present generation; its inadequacy will equal its adequacy. The present anarchy can only increase till the final cataclysm, the definite rupture of all unity, if not the loss of all real independence. Let us hope that Young China will at last begin to understand.

If not, what hopes can be founded on a social elect who will bow to no discipline, either of family or school or law, and aims at making a clean slate of the past with all its religious and philosophic tradition?

If only Young China would deign to submit to the classic forms of teaching the modern sciences. But he will not; in his real shrinking from effort, he tries to reduce it to a minimum, which makes it almost useless as a training of the mind. These meagre studies besides are constantly broken by interruptions and by the desired cessation of all work, — by the strike, in a word, — without reckoning the disturbances of all kinds, mainly political, which come so often to disturb study.



In truth, foreigners, and Americans in particular, are partly responsible in this matter; there have been too many lectures on liberty, the rights of man, too many social panaceas formulated. Young brains have been maddened, young brains which, though undergoing the crisis of change, are unfit by their traditions and their limited ancestral life in the family circle and geographical environment to separate the socialist chaff from the democratic good grain.

Even the good grain could hardly germinate in a night on Chinese soil, in the land of absolutism, whose patriarchal shape has been falsely trimmed to the ticket of 'government by the people.'

Then, besides dangerous mystics, too many well-intentioned people, full of altruism, have come to aggravate a social crisis which might have been resolved with some prudence, and a better comprehension of Chinese psychology, and of its forms of adaptation, modelled on solid traditions, on a family discipline of the most efficient kind.

On the plea of democracy, of the liberty of the individual, unhappily family discipline, the great social restraining influence in China, has been disturbed, — hence the present disorder in the schools and universities, as in the country.

It is high time to return to widespread social traditions which are the best heritage of the past, and for the Chinese their best guide.

The student has been put into a hot-house; he should be allowed, on the contrary, to develop more slowly in strict connection with those of his ancestral ideas

whose survival through so many vicissitudes has proved their great value.

Some mandarins of the old school whom I knew were full of practical intelligence and good sense, excelling in ruling the masses, and keeping them in the path of duty. The present Governor of Shansi, Yen, is a good example. He knows how to combine the modern and the traditional spirit in the best way; his province in consequence enjoys complete peace.

Catholic missionaries for their part have known how to build modern education on the foundation of Chinese tradition. They have taken care not to formulate a single political theory, democratic or other, nor to teach their pupils to criticize the established order, or to dictate to Ministers their home or foreign policy. Their schools, which are animated with the desire to increase the prestige of their country at the same time as the aptitudes of their Chinese pupils, could be considerably developed if their resources were not so small, in particular the excellent French creation, the University of Shanghai.

The French Government is not rich enough to give them adequate help. It thus becomes necessary that the financial world, the large banks particularly, should make up their minds to follow the example so frequently given by English and Americans. It is a fact that numbers of schools in China are entirely supported by the donations of private persons, or, more often, of great banking and commercial establishments. Have I not seen the English firms of Jardine and Butterfield putting their names down for £50,000

each to go to a scholastic foundation? Even the Chinese offer considerable sums to schools with a foreign label. I know of one who gave as much as 100,000 dollars at one time, Ho Tong of Canton.

Why have the French in China, bankers or wealthy merchants, given no help towards the needs of our good works, our schools, our laboratories, poorly endowed by our Government mainly on account of the depreciation of the franc? Why does not the Frenchman every now and then do the same acts of generosity as the Englishman or the American, not to speak of the Chinese? Does it reflect honour on himself to allow France to be outrivalled in the struggle for influence through science, a struggle which becomes more difficult each year as our means are reduced.

I have yet a word to say on 'returned students,' on the subject of whom the Far East Press has had so much to say.

These students, on their return from Europe or America, have been the cause of great disappointment both to their compatriots and to foreigners who endowed their studies in the expectation of appreciable results.

They are accused generally – (1) of showing little aptitude or ardour for work; (2) of servilely imitating the European, particularly in his bad habits; (3) of taking no further interest in the characteristics, tendencies, literature and history of their native land; (4) of exaggerating their knowledge of foreign sciences and of not having acquired anything but a smattering

without practical utility; (5) of parading their superiority and entertaining ambitions quite out of proportion to their capacity.

If, however, all this is true of many, it is not fair to generalize. I know returned students in China who have largely profited by their stay in Europe and have acquired culture and knowledge which will make them useful servants of their country.

This refers rather to the students returning from France and Belgium than from America, where studies are much less arduous.

However that may be, it seems to be true of most of these young people that as soon as they return to China they fall again under the ill-omened influence of the old tradition which has made the mandarin, that is the official, the man above all to be envied, and to whom honours and wealth naturally flow. The result is that the majority of young men aim at official positions, where life is at once easy and brilliant, and where the art of speaking, and the game of political intrigue, can be infinitely more profitable than any scientific calling.

Whatever the social status of a Chinaman, he finds supreme attractiveness in the career of politician or mandarin.

This turn of mind cannot lead to great things; it has already shown itself sterile; it can hardly tend to the development of men of strong character, active as well as prudent, of whom China has great need. Thus at the present time the result is the continuation of civil war, and the unworthy quarrels of clans, from

which the Tu-Chun alone gets a profit; deeper and deeper China sinks into the quicksands.

Some time ago an American paper, the *Far Eastern Review*, claimed for the returned student a title of honour for having 'changed the monarchy into a republic, ancient despotism into democracy, and for having effected the passage from Conservatism to Liberalism.'

Now, only look at recent history and see the irony of facts; China has indeed changed her banner, hoisted that of Republicanism, but how little this symbol coincides with the facts. They may prate of democratic rule in China, but the present king is the Tu-Chun, whose mercenaries, dregs of the population, are the terror of both cities and villages, which they pillage without mercy, even carrying away women and young girls for their pleasures.

From the foreigner's point of view, there is no longer any security for Europeans or Americans in a large number of the provinces; their lives and property are menaced. Their ships, plying the great rivers of the interior, are attacked, and constantly riddled with shot by the hordes of soldier-bandits who expect big booty from the vessel when run aground.

It would be too long to enumerate the sad series of outrages in the valley of the Yang-Tse or the Si Kiang where the victims have been numerous, without counting the murder or the kidnapping in other regions of inoffensive missionaries, American and English ladies, in order to extort ransoms. It is unnecessary to point out the painful nature of such captivity.

In short, the situation in China can be described in

two words – dictatorship on a small scale by various military chiefs at war with each other, – the result, civil war, anarchy, general misery. Add to this, permanent menace to the trade and to the life of the foreigner.

Thus we are very far from the happy transformation of which Washington dreamed two years ago at the time of the famous Conference; very far from the achievement so naively anticipated by the United States, – the definite establishment of a great yellow democracy as the immediate result of making large concessions to Chinese demands and of fully recognizing her sovereign rights. To talk of sovereign rights for China is all very well, but at least must she first possess a government, a responsible central authority, and that is very far from being the case to-day.

In this connection, it is well to examine the Ling-Cheng affair, May 8th, 1923, – the outrage against the express train Tien-tsin Pon Keon.

This affair caused very little sensation in Europe, because the public did not understand its disquieting significance, which is the more to be regretted because it is a fact of immense importance, – the best proof of the total collapse of the prestige of the white race in China, and, by repercussion, in the whole Far East. And this collapse is mainly the result of the Washington Conference.

The incident of Ling-Cheng is the most serious outrage committed by the Chinese against the white race since the Boxer epoch of 1900. Did they not dare to drive like a herd of beasts, barefoot and clad only in nightgowns, little American children and poor

women dragged from their beds in the middle of the night? Did they not strike them with the butt ends of their rifles, spit in their faces, and finally herd them in a mountain den with the threat of death if the conditions demanded by the soldier-bandits were refused by the Powers? But what is important to understand is that this affair was not merely a brutal incident, an act of savage brigandage, it was a characteristic Chinese intrigue, having all the appearance of a bold stroke planned to cause scandal and to discredit the party in power. This peculiarly Asiatic occurrence is typical of the cynical intrigues of the hundreds of factions who maintain anarchy in China and who have carried their audacity to the point of capturing white people to hold them as a trump card. In no respect then is this the time to dream of abandoning ex-territorial rights.

It is time also for the Great Powers to realize that China is nowise a progressive country, supremely anxious to develop its resources in peace and within the fair limits of its national rights, such as she was represented to be quite recently by America.

It is only a big country adrift, an enormous human mass disabled, seeking some new state of equilibrium which it seems to us is very far to seek, and impossible to achieve by China's unaided resources.

The advances of the Chinese in the scientific and even in the economic sphere are in fact more apparent than real. Only last year I had the opportunity of seeing at close quarters every grade of the community, and by comparison with the past (familiar to me from

an experience of twenty years) I was able to measure the distance traversed by the Chinese since the end of the War, and above all their progress since the Washington Conference.

I have never yet seen, except on rare occasions, the Chinaman so lacking in understanding, or so arrogant, as at the present time. Since the day when he absorbed, but did not digest, some notion of our sciences, he has placed himself higher than ever above the European; he claims to be able soon to do without him in all branches of scientific or industrial activity.

Even in the interior, in the most secluded provinces, the students and the lettered class affirm more and more openly their pretension to dominate the European and to put him back in the humiliating position of a century ago – that is to say, of an epoch in which we were regarded as mere barbarians under tribute to the Son of Heaven and consequently altogether unworthy of appearing on a footing of equality with a Chinaman. This arrogance is combined with a sly hostility which only awaits an opportunity to unmask itself, and to take the stupid but dangerous form which it assumed in the Boxer movement.

In this new frame of mind, the Chinaman no longer considers himself as bound by treaties: he has completely forgotten that he has duties of an international character. He has only too thoroughly assimilated the teaching of the Bolsheviks. The majority of the Tu-Chuns are more especially forgetful of the mutual obligations which exist between nations, and display bump-



tiousness which is equalled only by their ignorance of the elementary principles which govern all peoples. (An exception nevertheless must be made of the Governors of Shansi and of Yunnan.)

They have similar illusions upon the real state of China, and as to her incapacity to attain financial and consequently national independence for a long time to come.

In their pride certain Tu-Chuns have even come to believe themselves to be great warriors, able to defeat European armies. They believe that to-day they are strong, and herein lies the danger of the situation.

We should therefore beware of allowing the pacific China of former times to change gradually into a great military empire. With its Tu-Chuns, its increasing armies, and its organized legions of brigands, it seems more and more to be launched upon this course, so dangerous for peace.

This disturbing development is aggravated by the fact that the Bolshevik has come on the scene, and, posing as the champion of China, hurls a challenge to all the imperialists of Europe and America.

He seeks obviously a permanent understanding with the Chinese, and even negotiates treaties, yesterday with Peking, to-day with Mukden and with Chang-tso-lin. He is not less active in the South, where he found in Sun Yat Sen his best ally.

Together with the fanaticism of great revolutionaries, the Bolshevik shows an ardent thirst for domination, and reveals the temper of Tamerlane.

There is no longer any doubt that in Eastern Asia

he is making very active preparations for the establishment of a hegemony, menacing to the future of all, including the United States.

Confronted with such a danger, what is being done by the Great Powers, united by the Treaty of Washington? They look on, they send notes to Peking . . . and they wait.

This is the well-known policy of 'Wait and See': it is to be feared that the awakening will be as painful as it will be brutal, and the anxious question suggests itself, 'What will be the attitude of Japan? To which side will it lean?'

#### THE CHINAMAN AT SCHOOL

The Chinese student, in spite of appearances, is generally idle. If he is that *rara avis*, an industrious student, what is really striking about him is his marked want of continuity of effort. Often he shows the greatest willingness to learn; for some days, perhaps for some weeks, he achieves a considerable amount of work, then he suddenly disappears from the school; he has gone back to his village, where he will spend eighteen hours of the twenty-four talking, drinking tea and smoking pipes; at the end of a week he will return to the school, but the point to notice is that he has not been able to resist this impulse to leave, this need of prolonged relaxation.

Yet another characteristic of the student is that he is always satisfied with himself; his conceit is amazing. In an examination at the blackboard, even if he were the profoundest of dunces, he will never admit his own

incapacity but will denounce that of his professor. It is impossible for *him* to be an idle fool; it is the teacher who thus describes him in order to mask his own incompetence.

He appears at first of a voracious activity, but one soon realizes that this activity is only a futile fussiness combined with a highly developed spirit of intrigue. He is in this respect very feminine; he must meddle with everything, spout about everything, touch everything.

All the superficiality, all the inconstancy of mind of the race are summed up in the student.

This frivolity, combined with a repugnance for prolonged effort, ill fits him for the study of Western sciences, but what makes things worse is the conceit which leads him to believe that our sciences are nothing compared with his literature, that he can acquire them without exerting himself, and in a much shorter time than the European student, though the latter is of course much better prepared, and is not confined like the Chinaman to merely memorizing what he learns.

Students of all ages are characterized by a marked dislike of discipline, a contempt of all that is orderly and methodical. The young Chinaman, unless he is physically compelled, will conform to no rule, and desires to study or amuse himself as he thinks fit. He plays practical jokes upon his masters, and is ever plotting against them.

What he chiefly demands from his masters is that he shall be rapidly taught. When I was a professor at Chengtufu, in the School of Imperial Medicine which

I founded, I endeavoured but in vain to explain to the mandarins that in order really to master one of the Western sciences a European required some years – four or five at least, – preceded by a long preparation. No one was willing to believe me, or rather they uttered under their breath the comment that we were really the hopelessly stupid barbarians that they thought we were.

It is particularly the preparatory studies which disgust the students. As soon as they are given to understand that beyond the elementary stages there is a higher grade of instruction, they wish to advance at once to this stage.

Thus my pupils demanded to be instantly taught surgery, leaving out the study of anatomy, which they regarded as negligible, because one would thus arrive more quickly at the end of one's studies, and this was the real object in view. The Chinaman is a sly fellow.

Yet again, you are perhaps professor of chemistry in an official school. Your pupils one day inform you abruptly that they find chemistry a bore, and that they desire a change, say, the integral calculus, or zoology, and there is general amazement when you refuse the request.

And yet China had heard so much of the marvels of chemistry and of physics; in those sciences lay the true secret of the power of the foreign devils. Students in their twenties, urchins in school, were eager to learn them. They wished to commence with them, – to learn quickly the formulæ of this organic chemistry which enables one to manufacture wealth, and those

amusing things that are called explosives. But when these ardent students had seen what chemistry was as it is taught, and the complexity of chemical combinations, they were surprised and disgusted. Chemistry soon went out of fashion, and then it was mineralogy or international law which had the preference. Mineralogy, you can guess why, – they would be able to discover treasure; international law, – they could quickly learn how to do for the white barbarians.

But you ask, Is there no inspection of studies? There is certainly the mandarin of the place, but if he should be an academician (*han lin*) he would rarely know anything but his own literature. As for oxygen or nitrogen, mammalia or dicotyledons, he has never heard of them.

These last few years, the Government has indeed tried to put a little order in the educational system, but it lacks both authority and jurisdiction. The central Government is nothing more than a shadow, in the anarchy which has followed the establishment of the republic. There are no real schools except those set up by foreigners with their own professors, and the pupils often escape from their authority.

They meet more and more in the famous students' committees of the Government schools, and pass the best part of their time in discussions or political demonstrations, denouncing on every hand the dark designs and encroachments of foreigners.

Under these conditions, how can the young Chinaman make any progress in acquiring a scientific education? He has only learned to chatter in scientific

jargon, and has acquired nothing but an indigestible hash of vague European science of the most rudimentary kind, and Chinese literature.

This ingrained frivolity of the student, his desire for variety and excitement, naturally prevent hard mental work. One day he will apply himself doubtless to our sciences, but without going deeply into them and making them his own.

After centuries of immobility, the cause of which is certainly biological, is it likely that he can make serious and profound progress as quickly as some people think? It is at least probable that all the defects I have pointed out, the indiscipline alone excepted, are inherent in the Chinese race.

Does the experience of these last few years encourage the expectation of fruitful progress?

Evidently not. Or again, can the study of our sciences under the present conditions bring practical and palpable results? All the evidence says no. They are even very often pronounced to be worthless. The Chinaman had once such great hopes! Industrially, he was going immediately to manufacture what Europeans manufacture, even the most complicated chemical products; he was going to learn in three or four years how to organize real factories, he was going to construct railways, ports, etc. What is there astonishing in the fact that the attempts made to realize such dreams have resulted in chilling the most ardent!

Thus, everything has to be started afresh; and the indispensable guide is the unwanted European.

## THE FUTURE OF CHINA

THE ACTION WHICH THE WHITE RACE MUST TAKE IN  
THE EVOLUTION OF CHINA

AT this period of economic crisis affecting the whole world, it is important for us to enlarge our horizon, and look far beyond our own frontiers. It will then be realized that this crisis is still more serious than one would imagine, if we ignore Asia, and in particular that enormous market of Eastern Asia.

The question is: Will these immense and thickly populated territories respond to our hopes, and can they come to the aid of Europe in getting her out of her difficulties? For instance, will China with her hundreds of millions of people shortly become one of the greatest markets in the world, and furnish Europe with abundance of raw material at a low price; will she, on the other hand, buy more of our manufactured products?

It will be well, then, to examine the economic future of China, and the extent of her possibilities.

The Anglo-Saxon world in recent years has been intoxicated at the thought of the immensity of China, and the prospect of an intensive and general exploitation of the whole territory under a new régime, liberal or so supposed: the effect of the inauguration of the Republic in 1911.

Unhappily it has chiefly considered the façade as it were, and has reckoned upon mere possibilities, or on certain investigations of the most superficial character,

such as that which has wrongly ascribed to China enormous mineral resources. Because China is vast and possesses an immense labour supply, the whole Press of the United States, even more than the English Press, have celebrated in unison the 'immense resources' and the 'fabulous wealth' of China.

It was Eldorado so often dreamed, the enormous legendary market, which was to solve all economic crises, and enrich every nation capable of securing for itself a large place therein.

Even the political disorder and the civil war resulting from the new régime led no one to serious reflection. It was a delirium, a real frenzy of commercial greed.

Appetites were quickly whetted and extended. The United States in particular made an immense effort with the idea of securing her own economic predominance.

A campaign of moral sway was at the same time organized, energetically led by the religious missions and the Y.M.C.A.

But there was England as well, with a strong commercial position acquired long ago, which it sought to defend and maintain; this seemed all the more necessary as India was causing it keen disappointment, and threatened to be no longer the great expanding market capable of satisfying British industrial undertakings. At any rate, it is true that a whole campaign has been set on foot these last few years by the Press to invite English industry to turn its eyes more and more towards China – more populous, they say (but



that is not certain), and richer than India (but that is not certain either).

But why these reserves and doubts, on my part? It will be easy soon to judge.

In fact, no nation, whatever the extent of its natural resources, can develop itself except in peace and under a Government adapted to its age in evolution. Now what is the present situation of China?

It is well known. At the present day, or rather since the inauguration of the Republic, the brutal fact which attracts universal attention is the anarchic state of this great country: there is disorder everywhere, industry and commerce are paralysed, and in consequence even those foreign enterprises against which there is not a word to be said – European, American or Japanese – are threatened. But what tends mainly to ruin the country is the incessant fighting between the Tu-Chuns, or military dictators. Thus production in general is greatly reduced by massacres and pillage and destruction of the means of work. In certain provinces, provinces as vast as the whole of France, where the greater part of the transport is carried on the backs of men or animals, the losses have been so great that cultivation and internal trade will be reduced for many years to come.

More than that, the maintenance of watercourses, which have been carried on less for navigation than for irrigation, has been greatly neglected; the regulating and distributing canals and the precious dykes have not received the constant care given in time of peace.

## THE FUTURE OF CHINA

This glance at the economic situation now enables us to understand why this country, suffering periodically from drought or from flood and consequently from famine, has been so hard hit in recent years. It is easy to see also that, faced with the necessity for unceasing struggle with the elements, the persistence of civil war and the reign of the military chieftains bring intolerable suffering to all China, particularly as the military leaders do not fail to press forward the cultivation of the opium poppy, thus reducing the area for growing cereals.

Such is the situation.

What a task for those who, like the United States, have declared themselves to be the champions of the old civilization, who aim at renewing it in their own image, and stabilizing it in peace and prosperity.

First of all, it is necessary to clear out of China the mercenaries, the Free Companies, who are devouring her, more than a million and a half in number, not counting the common brigands, who, numerous enough in ordinary times, have now become legion; it is necessary also to free her from that generation of mandarins whose maxim with regard to the people has been and remains, 'There is no dog so thin that you cannot squeeze a bit of fat out of him,' an allusion to the official plundering of centuries.

To rid China of all these scourges, what a Herculean labour! But if I set forth the evil and the whole evil of the situation, I do it solely in the interests of Young China, so that it may withdraw into silence, in place of its present agitation, and seek to measure the greatness of its task.

But it may be objected that the present situation, however serious, cannot last, and is nothing but a simple political crisis.

Profound mistake: the crisis is mainly social and economic, therefore infinitely grave.

From a social point of view there has been an upheaval.

In truth, the sudden change of government, the abrupt imposition of a democratic system in 1911, dealt a terrible blow to the Chinese social machinery, completely dislocated it, and put nothing in the gap that could be fitted in there. Raising the Republican standard could not effect an organic transformation: peoples do not change their character as they do their shirts. China made a leap in the dark to a system of government which can only be efficiently established by cautious stages. As the great statesman Yuan Che Kai justly said, 'They have chipped the people's feet to fit them into the new Government shoes.'

Hence the present anarchy.

Above all, there have been taught in China certain democratic doctrines, excellent from a philosophic point of view, but detestable and destructive for people who are still much nearer infancy than maturity, and it is impossible to deny that they have largely contributed to produce the social disorder and the ever-increasing anarchy in which the new Republic is at the present time floundering. We must realize once for all that our political and social ideas administered in large doses must as a result upset the balance of the Asiatic. Why? Because he has not yet reached the

biological age at which these ideas can be truly and fruitfully assimilated. Full of enthusiasm, wishing to transform their country in a day, the young Chinese, such as the doctor Sun Yat Sen, have roughly flung her forward, flouting all her traditions. Punishment has not been long in coming; it has been immediate, for the laws of evolution permit no violation.

In short, since the day when the young Chinese, fresh from the Universities of Europe and America, and strongly upheld by powerful foreign organizations, succeeded in overthrowing the dynasty of the Ts'-ing: since the day when a government styled 'democratic' was abruptly substituted for the old absolutism, China has ceased to enjoy internal peace. The Central Government has by degrees lost all authority over the provinces, while these have fallen one after another under the yoke of the Tu-Chuns, so thoroughly that the disorder of the first years of the Republic has been quickly turned into anarchy, under the hardest of despotisms.

The confusion of parties, the very sharply conflicting interests of the clans, or rather of their appetites, is such that no durable rule can be established. Never have I seen in the provinces, with the sole exception of Shansi, such lack of discipline, such a want of regard for public morality, shown in an absolute indifference to the common interest.

Even the family so strongly organized – the foundation of order and social tranquillity – has suffered. There is no longer any authority but that of the sword – that of the Tu-Chuns.

Even the family, I say, has suffered, that is to say, the cult of the ancestor, the religious system with more power over the Chinese conscience than all human laws; this system renowned in Chinese history, on which rests the whole social and political edifice. This is a fact grave both for the present and the future.

The natural result is the decline of public morality, mediocre at the best of times, apart from family discipline.

I must say a few words on Chinese morality, since it has been for some little time one of the questions of the day in Europe. That the moral code contains excellent rules of conduct, particularly in what concerns the family, no one will deny. But for those who know it well, particularly in its practice, it is not impressive by reason of any superiority, and has never created supermen. It can even be said that this morality in its practical application is above all a question of 'face,' that is to say, it is a 'façade' morality, a ritual. The fault is of small importance, if only appearances are observed.

It is noteworthy also that this code of morality has had so little hold on the masses that those in authority, in order to maintain discipline, have had to apply in all ages the most barbarous penalties: horrible punishments such as the well-known *ting che*, or 'the torture of the hundred thousand pieces.'

There has existed also the famous penal principle (abolished only in 1911) of collective responsibility, involving all the members of a family, in all its living generations, for the crime of a single member.

Many writers in recent times have discussed China. One of them, wishing to impress the imagination of his readers, has declared that modern Europe in its disorder could realize salvation only by the complete adoption of Chinese morality. But of this morality he seems to know very little, particularly in its effect upon the Chinese character, which it has so little fashioned, so little withdrawn from the impulses of instinct.

Chinese morality offered to the world as an example! Here is indeed a strange idea. But is not this idea derived from that new mysticism, the wisdom of the East – a wisdom ill-defined, in which the fetish worship of certain writers or theosophists seeks the solution of all present problems, and a sure return to the Golden Age, to the reign of the great Confucian sages? When it is not China which is offered to us as an example, it is India. But from whom has India taken her ancient culture, which alone is great and fruitful? From the Aryan.

In short, Chinese wisdom which has been so much vaunted is nothing but that 'wisdom of the nations' common to so many peoples, which coming to the Celestial Empire from the West came to us from the East – that is, from the Near East and from Central Asia. But it is very necessary not to forget that there is a morality of precept and a morality of action. Now, without boasting of ourselves, we have for centuries practised especially this latter, and by means of it have acquired a great dynamic force which has revealed itself in a powerful evolution, while the China-

## MODERN CHINESE CIVILIZATION

man has simply adorned himself with morality of precepts, has made of it a splendid façade and a convenient mask. Except at rare epochs his whole history is there to prove this. It is this which explains many of the halts in his political and economic development.

It is then wrongly that certain doctrinaire writers, who have no experience of the world which lives and moves, or of its diverse races, show so much disdain for their own civilization. The truth is that, in spite of weaknesses and errors, our civilization still stands very high above the moral systems of Asia, especially if one considers their results and their real impression upon humanity.

### THE ECONOMIC FUTURE OF CHINA; ITS AGRICULTURE

It is here, above all, that we find the touchstone for the future of this country, and here also the stumbling-block.

Large industries are still but little developed, from the want of capital and of the means of rapid transport, and are confined to the open ports such as Shanghai or Hankow. Moreover, the economic potentialities of China will long be found in its agriculture. One can say that it is dominant to such an extent that it still absorbs nearly 90 per cent. of the population. The future of China will then consist chiefly of the activity and the gradual development of its rural economy.

As for its capacity to export, and consequently to purchase, it will be in virtue, as it is to-day, of its agricultural production. It is therefore this production which concerns Europe to the highest degree.

What, then, are the prospects?

To appreciate them I will base myself only upon definite facts collected in the interior of the country in regions very different from one another, on a tour of investigation of more than 12,500 miles carried out in short stages during many years.

I will tell what I have seen with my own eyes, what I have long observed in the mountains as in the plains, in the course of my geological and botanical studies, or those which I have devoted to anthropology, that important science which allows us to gauge the physical and psychical potentialities of a race or people – that is to say, its capacity for action or evolution.

The picture of agricultural China, like so many other descriptions which I formerly traced, is somewhat different from those published by too many persons, who have no general scientific education, and who really imagine that to stay two or three months in the great international cities of China – that is to say, on the threshold of this continent – gives them the right to perorate endlessly upon this immense country.

When one crosses the immense plains of Eastern China, one is especially struck with the absence of all clumps of trees, and of any forest. In winter the soil lies in complete nakedness, with no sign of brush-wood or hedge.

Go elsewhere upon the tablelands or in mountainous regions; there is the same bareness, except for a few groups of trees which have sprung up in inaccessible spots. I have passed through real forests, but only in



Thibet, or in those hills of far west China inhabited by the independent tribes of the Lolos. Everywhere else, where the Chinaman is master, the forest has disappeared. For it he is pitiless. It is true to say that the Chinese peasant, speaking generally, reveals himself as a heedless being, living without care for the morrow. He has not understood nor wished to understand that forests guarantee a regular rainfall, and afford the best security for annual and recurring harvests. He has, on the contrary, everywhere obliterated the forest, in ignorance of the fatal effects of this error. The peasant, moreover, believes in the policy of the least possible effort. He acts mechanically, by rote, without ambition, and without sound judgment. Hence he has also not understood the need for grassland, and has everywhere sacrificed it to the growth of cereals. Consequently there is a very restricted number of domestic animals, and their quality is very mediocre because they are badly nourished, and there is no selective breeding. The herd of fatted beasts does not exist, and cannot help to make up for the present insufficiency of cereals.

The Chinaman therefore vegetates in poverty; and the agony of making sure his daily pittance has thus continued throughout the centuries.

The mandarin has not interfered; thus China to-day lacks grasslands, firewood, wood for construction, wood for cabinet-making. For the sleepers of her railways she is obliged to apply to the foreigner.

When I had long studied Central and Western China, I desired to acquaint myself with Northern

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China, the regions of *loess*, of that formation which is well known for its fertility. As it covers immense stretches, hundreds of thousands of square miles from east to west, and as the cereals of the temperate regions grow there easily, it ought to be an abundant granary for China.

Unhappily it is not so.

As elsewhere, the agricultural populations and their chief men remain wholly unaware of the consequences of destroying trees. The famines from which they have so cruelly suffered do not appear to have enlightened them.

From Shansi I wrote to the Geographical Society:

'The inhabitants have transformed a large part of this fine province into desert zones; and they are still busy at this task.

'I have just crossed a high tableland, where in a wild and secluded spot a luxuriant vegetation was to be seen whose beauty was most impressive in the midst of the general desolation. In the shelter of a few trees, pines, birch trees, poplars and limes, white lilies grow wild with eleagnus, and daphnes. I noticed also many bushes of an oak, a kinsman of ours, but in vain did I seek any specimen with the stature of a tree. In the less isolated districts the axe and the billhook have felled and obliterated the trees, and to-day the hoe is brought to tear up the last remaining roots of the last remaining shrubs on the slopes of the hills. This is to create a new patch, a new field, to replace one in the valley which had been one day buried under the boulders of rock that had rolled from the bare moun-

tain side, which because it was bare was exposed to the maximum effects of erosion. The stripped mountain was avenging itself by covering with its boulders the fertile field of the stupid peasant and making it barren for ever. It is thus that desert comes into being, and rapidly spreads.

'I have seen plateaus of the richest *loess* so seamed with ravines by the furious waters that they appeared like a gigantic star with innumerable rays, stretching further every year towards the centre and devouring the fertile soil until every inhabitant is driven away.

'Except in isolated corners which become more and more rare, where vegetation has preserved the humus of the earth against the fury of the summer rains, everywhere upon the tablelands, upon the slopes of the hills and elevations, there is an aspect of nakedness and of desolation which is extremely impressive. It might be said that Attila and all his hordes had passed that way, he whose horse rendered barren with its hoof the very grass. It is an incredible spectacle of the ruin, deliberate however, of a beautiful country and of a fertile soil. Before the lapse of twenty-five years this work of destroying all growth of tree or bush will be fully accomplished, in spite of the efforts of the present governor, Yen, a man of intelligence and character. He strives to reafforest, but the opinion of those interested does not support him, for their want of comprehension of rural economy is that of primitive folk who live without care for the morrow.'

And thus it is with all the provinces.

Doubtless the objection will be advanced: 'But the great plains escape from the effects of erosion?'

No, they are affected indirectly. The melting of the snows, joined with the violent rains of summer, throws suddenly into the valley bottoms enormous masses of water because the forest is no longer there to regulate the flow. Hence every year there are floods in the north, in the centre, or in the south; vast stretches being submerged with their crops. Or else, always because of the widespread deforestation, there is an insufficiency of snow and of rain, hence drought, and harvests jeopardized. Those who have not seen thousands of famishing beings along the roads, awaiting death with a heart-breaking resignation, cannot form any idea of the extent of this devastation. Thus the reign of a bare living and even of famine establishes itself more and more in China. And emigration to Manchuria, Mongolia or the European colonies in the Pacific, becomes inevitable.

Is this state of affairs of recent origin? No. It is the work of the past, of long centuries of heedlessness and of want of understanding, but it becomes worse every decade, and it is not the new régime which has sprung from the revolution of 1911 which can change the situation; on the contrary, as we have seen, it has made matters worse.

To sum up, whether one considers the present or the distant past, the Chinaman has never succeeded in ensuring for himself a regular supply of daily bread or the daily rice. Nor has he known how to create easy means of communication, roads suitable for

wheeled traffic, so that he has been obliged to rely on man himself for transport, and to use him as a beast of burden.

Hence it is that a large percentage of the population of China wears itself out upon the roads, and is diverted from more productive occupations. We have seen also China's incapacity of appreciating the importance of stock-breeding, for food, for transport, and for the manuring of the fields.

The realization of this fact is of great importance, for it means an unfitness of the Chinese to organize in the economic field, which is a sure indication of biological significance; the mark of an evolution delayed by organic or racial incompetence.

What are we to conclude? That the great hopes of the Anglo-Saxon world rest on very problematical foundations, especially as the Chinaman tends more and more, because of his conceit, to refuse the help of the European.

Nevertheless, to whom is due the only progress realized in the economic sphere? Who waked China from her sleep, from her age-long routine? Was it not the European? And it is also he who created those great prosperous cities called the 'Concessions,' centres from which is sent forth and received such vitality as circulates in China's enormous mass.

These 'Concessions' besides are oases in the misery and present-day danger — refuges ardently sought by every Chinaman. If indeed, since 1918, China has escaped economic collapse, she owes it solely to foreign action, to such organizations as those of the

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Customs, the Posts and the Salt Tax. One may even say that the receipts from these services form the only revenue regularly collected, and banked in their entirety. Without them, without their continued increase under the superintendence of Europeans, China would long ago have been declared bankrupt.

At the same time, what would she not gain by a certain amount of control of her railways and particularly of her desperately embarrassed finances? For it is incontestable that the white race has set in China the good example of organization and disinterested service, and devotion to public interest, a virtue so rare in Asia.

I do not hesitate to declare that the problem of the re-establishment of order and peace, an indispensable condition of all economic transformation, is insoluble for the Chinaman unaided: he has neither the will, nor the capacity, nor the technical and financial means to set about it. Modern organization, political and economic, recently introduced, is manifestly too complex for a Chinese brain. It is a question of evolution which cannot be solved overnight.

Young China on its return from Europe and from America would do well to meditate on Ovid's famous phrase: *Natura non facit saltus*.

But how can China be extricated from her present situation? Certainly it is not by the present generation of her country – so far astray, so confused in its ideas – that she can be rescued. But there must be an end of the present state of things; all classes of society have had enough of these ruinous fratricidal struggles,

which fatten a hundredth part of the population to the detriment of the other ninety-nine-hundredths.

The hour then has come for the Great Powers to act, the hour to convey indispensable help, in which there is no taint of Imperialism. It is necessary to restore and even to extend that co-operation with Europe which has hitherto been so fruitful. The Chinaman must not forget that without European capital and technical assistance he would have neither railways nor modern ports.

The moment is so serious for the future of the country that Young China ought to weigh all the perils which menace and show more wisdom.

Large systems of communication must be constructed, but the principal need is to reorganize agriculture, the supreme resource of China, which must be regenerated and recreated in a practical manner by restoring pasture land and woods.

As regards cultivation proper, China should be inspired by European science, and should gradually arrive at increasing her present output, so mediocre mainly because of the lack of manure.

She should cease also to sacrifice so much good land to the culture of opium. These changes are the more desirable because Europe and America are in need of the oleaginous products and the various textiles of China; but their annual production is so variable that it defies all commercial forecasts.

Any effort at the improvement of regular returns will fail as long as systematic afforestation is not effected.

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But that is the work of a Titan, in a country where alone the dead in their tombs, the mandarins and the rich have a right to the beneficent shade of a tree.

Also, vast regions are being gradually dried up, such as Turkestan and Northern China, because they are no longer receiving any but a meagre and irregular quantity of rain or snow.

But reafforestation, of a territory so vast, can only be carried on by the European; he alone is capable of a like effort.

The forestry service should be organized on the model of the Customs, for example.

Such are the present necessities.

The task is severe, a work of time as much for China as for the signatory Powers of the Washington Treaty. All the more severe, because Bolshevik Imperialism is becoming in the Far East an increasingly apparent menace. If we do not take care the evil will soon be irreparable.

It is for the United States to speak: but that the augurs should pronounce is a matter of urgent necessity!

It is no less a matter than the peace of the world, and its prosperity, and also the rescue of hundreds of millions of beings, who, left to themselves, have a half-century before them of struggling in the anguish of insecurity and advancing ruin. Let us think also of this: instead of wealth to exploit, for certain nations there will remain in this great country only misery to alleviate.

This China would be not the Great Power but the Great Pity of the twentieth century.



A Frenchman declared recently, on slender data, that China would be the Great Power of the twentieth century. And he likened her approaching development to that of the United States in the course of the nineteenth century. Now, no comparison is less justified, either from the geographic and economic standpoint or from the racial.

In the United States we have a new country with immense agricultural, timber and mineral resources, which are not to be found in a China which has squandered her wealth, and greatly diminished it by errors hard to repair.

Neither can the human factor in the two cases be compared. The one country is represented by a race overflowing with vitality and creative power; the other by an aged people, without cohesion, without ideals, long in a state of stupor, and whose evolution will be always retarded by a certain racial characteristic – the hybridism of which I have spoken.

Moreover, this Frenchman has judged according to what he saw in the great international cities of Shanghai or Tien-tsin, overflowing with life and prosperity. But these great cities are entirely the work of the white race, the creative and organizing race.

That is not China, the real China; that, this Frenchman never saw.

China, the Great Power of the twentieth century! Think over what you have just read, and judge!

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